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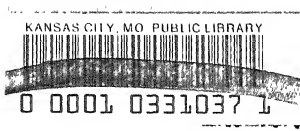
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by the same author

OUR ULTIMATE AIM IN THE WAR

(1916)

PEACE WITH SECURITY

(1916)

THE CHURCHES AND THE COMING PEACE

(1918)

RICHARD ACLAND ARMSTRONG

A Memoir by his Son

WHY ANOTHER WORLD WAR?

HOW WE MISSED
COLLECTIVE SECURITY

BY

GEORGE GILBERT
ARMSTRONG

“The difference between Heaven and Hell is, in the last resort, the presence in Heaven and the absence from Hell of Collective Security: the League of Nations sought to establish it—as it shall yet be established—on Earth.”

LONDON

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WOKING

Kurtz: *Whatever the problems mankind faces, sooner or later a solution will come! Man has the power to decide simply this: When! Will it be sooner, or will it be later?*—ROBERT ARDREY, *Thunder Rock*.

Don't say: "Sin is strong, evil environment is overpowering, and we are lonely and helpless." Put away that objection, my friends! Then take yourselves in hand and make yourselves responsible for the evil doers. Once you sincerely accept this responsibility you will come to see that you are indeed to blame for all the evil in the world.—FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

O God of all creatures, all worlds, and all time, I cannot believe that Thou hast given us hearts to hate each other or hands to butcher each other. Grant, then, that we may use these Thy gifts in helping each other to bear the burdens of our short and difficult life.—VOLTAIRE *Treatise on Tolerance*.

For peace is not merely the absence of war, but a living force born of the steadfastness of mind.—SPINOZA.

TO
DOROTHY MONKS AND ANOTHER
BUT FOR WHOSE GENEROSITY
THIS BOOK
COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED

A FOREWORD

WHY ANOTHER WORLD WAR when the last World War ended with a Solemn League and Covenant conferring Collective Security on all the nations? Because the Covenant was broken and the League ignored. This book is to show how Britain led in this disastrous destruction. It shows it step by step, some of the steps taken consciously and some of them unconsciously. But that very unconsciousness is surely a major part of the crime. And the conscious and unconscious instruments are plain to be seen and are indicated here by name.

When *Guilty Men*, Mr. Gollancz's famous best seller, appeared, I was at once struck by the fact that "Cato's" four principal men of guilt—Lord Baldwin, Sir John Simon, Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Neville Chamberlain—were the very same men as I was engaged in indicting though for a different offence; and that the two indictments were complementary and not mutually opposed. "Cato's" indictment was for foreseeing a war and not adequately preparing for it: my indictment is for not foreseeing—or acting as if they did not foresee—that the policy for which they were responsible was making war certain and for cutting away the precautions against war which better men than they—Lord Cecil, Lord Balfour, Sir Austen Chamberlain Arthur Henderson—had toilsomely built up. That these men should have destroyed the system of Collective Security and the Covenant behind it is terrible enough in view of the sequel: that, perpetrating *that*, they did not take adequate precautions to deal adequately with the inevitable sequel when it came, would be unbelievable without the damning evidence "Cato" set forth. "Cato's" evidence was "well documented": I claim that mine is also.

If Britain is successful in beating back the Nazi attack, a new "Expeditionary Force" is foreshadowed to destroy Hitler's rule in Europe. No Expeditionary Force can do that unless Hitler's Europe is first convinced that some better way than Hitler's way will follow in its steps. Britain will have to lead the world in the establishment of a New Order better fitted than that established after the last war to preserve the world peace—a Collective Security that makes it for ever impossible that one nation shall hold all others to ransom. This has

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not been possible while these "guilty men" have held prominent positions in the Government which will have to convince the world of Britain's sincerity in seeking this New Order and of their possession of the foresight that can secure it. But Lord Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain resigned, Mr. Chamberlain to die, and Mr. Churchill has skilfully "promoted" Sir Samuel Hoare and others one by one as opportunity came round; Lord Simon is Lord Chancellor, but he is no longer in the War Cabinet.

Mr. Churchill's election to the leadership of the Conservative Party is a handicap, but his personality is forcible enough to overcome it. No British Statesman has ever had so great an opportunity. He has imagination, and no one has expounded the principles of that Liberalism which is the antidote for Fascism and Nazism more clearly and more understandingly than he did more than thirty years ago. Will he be able to hark back to them? There are signs that he will.

To strive that Britain shall lead in establishing after this War the Collective Security which she failed to maintain after the last and the New Order supporting it is equally the duty of those who believe in the efficacy of force and of those who do not so believe. This book is to call for union among all lovers of peace for this supreme effort.

On page 179 I comment on the effect of our blockade on French children. It has since been announced that the British and American Governments had come to an agreement "whereby a cargo of foodstuffs will be sent for distribution, under American Red Cross control, to children in unoccupied France." That is cause for deep thankfulness, but alas the announcement does not affect occupied France, nor Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Italy, and Germany, where there are also children—and mothers. I must also note that a great number of interned refugees (see p. 180) are now being released—but apparently most grudgingly.

G. G. A.

133 NORTH END ROAD, LONDON, N.W.11

January 25, 1941.

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1919 and 1940: A Startling Contrast

The dictated peace with Germany in 1919 was drawn up by the five "Principal Allied and Associated Powers"—the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan—and was signed in addition by the smaller Allied Powers—Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Rumania, Serbia and Siam with the two newly established Powers—Czechoslovakia and Poland. By whom will the next peace with Germany be signed? By the British Commonwealth and Greece, surely. By the United States?—perhaps. Perhaps also by *émigré* Governments from France, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg and possibly from Denmark and Norway as well. But Germany will doubtless set up to speak for most of these and perhaps for Italy, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria too. Where everything is guesswork, if we want to cast our minds forward to the Peace—and of course we do—we had better consider what sort of a peace we should aim at if the British Commonwealth alone stood *vis-à-vis* Germany and Italy.

It would be a startling contrast. There would be no Clemenceau, with his troops at the frontier, contesting every inch of the argument with Woodrow Wilson, plus the enchained Hang-the-Kaiser-Lloyd-George on the side of Clemenceau with the sobered-but-not-yet-free-Lloyd-George on the side of Wilson. Whatever the *émigré* Governments desired, we alone—if America kept out of it—should have armed forces behind us which neither France nor anyone else could order to go on fighting when we saw an acceptable peace ahead, and we should have no one else to blame for any mistakes that were made on our side. We may well ponder and pray over so overwhelming a responsibility.

Britain is subjecting Hitler's Europe to an economic blockade with her navy and Hitler claims to be subjecting Britain to an economic blockade with his U-boats and his bombers. (An "invasion" of either by either is still unlikely but possible.) The Nazi power may crumble up under the strain, but the war *may* end in stalemate. Whichever it is, there are some things that have happened that cannot be undone.

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Throughout Europe military and economic frontiers have been obliterated. Mr. Middleton Murry says:¹

The mere fact that it is Hitler who is going to abolish the frontier between France and Germany is lamentable—I wish to God we could have done it. I would that you who feel a little despondent about the chances of world peace would realise that there are diabolical agents of divine justice. What we have compelled Hitler to do violently and bloodily are the things we had not the imagination or the courage to do ourselves.

Who dare desire the restoration of sovereign States in Europe each with its army, navy and air force and each with its doubtful loyalty to a League of Nations, and its customs and its passports, visas and permits. Throughout Europe and in Britain and largely in America as well, private enterprise in agriculture and manufacture, has given place to State direction not only for the arming and provisioning of armies, but for the suppression of luxuries and the rationing of necessities. Even in this capitalistic Europe capital also is being controlled and rationed on both sides. But for the restoration of the populations to health and well-being a world-wide regulation of production and distribution is essential. For much of the death and disease succeeding the last war “big business” behind the Allied and Associated Powers, tiring of universal “rationing,” was surely responsible. Britain had a scheme for the extension of the rationing to the defeated enemy peoples: America it was who destroyed the whole system by her insistence on the prompt tumbling back to national go-as-you-please that followed the Armistice.² It may well be doubted whether the peoples once accustomed to a pooled system as a part of the peace restoration would ever wish, whatever “big business” desired, to go back to the go-as-you-please anarchy of 1919-39.

“The instinct behind the Hitler drive,” says Mr. J. L. Hammond,³ “answers to some great public need, and to defeat it, it is not enough to stand on the defensive.”

This savage barbarism attacks the achievements by which the man has civilised his life, and those achievements, in the form of human liberties and rights, must be defended at all costs. But we cannot

¹ At the National Peace Conference on “The Responsibilities of the Peace Movement in the Present Situation,” on June 29, 1940.

² See Appendix III, below.

³ “The Unity of Europe,” in the *Manchester Guardian* of July 16, 1940.

1919 and 1940: A Startling Contrast

defend them permanently, or perhaps even for the time, unless we recognise that there is something deeply wrong in the Europe that Hitler wants to reorganise, and unless we have some plan to oppose to his. The League of Nations, in the hands of Governments that have no strong or large plans in their minds, becomes the symbol of what Mr. Amery has well called "the vague pacifist internationalism of a war-weary world." Many looking at the collapse of that Europe think that unity, whatever its form, is better than the anarchy of the last ten years. . . .

The liberal nations have to provide a scheme under which the position of small nations in Europe would not be that of a pawn in the game of power politics but that of a people drawing strength from the common resources, material and moral, of the whole of Europe. This involves a new conception of the duties of nations to each other.

M. Reynaud's ideal is "All the earth for all the people. Each country's 'living room' is the entire world."⁴ M. Daladier said:⁵ "It will be necessary perhaps to envisage federal ties between the various States of Europe," and M. Blum⁶ speaks of "the integration of Germany into a European system—the independence and security of peoples in a federated and disarmed Europe must be guaranteed." Mr. Chamberlain, while still Prime Minister, said:⁷

There is nothing which would do more to facilitate the task of peaceful reconstruction which has got to be undertaken some time than the extension of Anglo-French collaboration in finance and economics to every nation in Europe, and, indeed, perhaps to the whole world.

And there are Mr. Churchill's two steps for drawing closer the alliance with France prompted by similar thoughts. The first took the form of a joint declaration of the two Governments undertaking⁸

to maintain, after the conclusion of peace, a community of action in all spheres for so long as may be necessary to safeguard their security and to effect the reconstruction, with the assistance of other nations, of an international order which will ensure the liberty of peoples, respect for law, and the maintenance of peace in Europe.

The other was the offer to France⁹ which she rejected when she decided on surrender to Hitler. A draft Declaration of Union was

⁴ Quoted by Mr. Maxwell Garnett in *A Lasting Peace* (George Allen & Unwin), p. 14.

⁵ Quoted by Sir William Beveridge in *Peace by Federation?* (Federal Union), pp. 7, 8.

⁶ The same.

⁷ At the Mansion House on January 9, 1940.

⁸ March 28, 1940.

⁹ June 16, 1940.

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communicated to the French Government by the British Ambassador, declaring that "the Government of the United Kingdom and the French Republic make this declaration of insoluble union."

The two Governments declare that France and Great Britain shall no longer be two, but one Franco-British Union. The Constitution of the Union will provide for joint organs of defence, foreign, financial and economic policies. . . . Every citizen of France will enjoy immediately citizenship of Great Britain. Every British subject will become a citizen of France. Both countries will share responsibility for the repair of the devastation of war wherever it occurs in their territories, and the resources of both shall be equally and as one applied to that purpose. During the war there shall be a single War Cabinet and all the forces of Britain and France, whether on land, sea or in the air, will be placed under its direction. It will govern from wherever it best can. The two Parliaments will be formally associated. . . .

This is surely an enormously important model for Federal Union in the future.

An ever-growing literature is published on this idea of "Federal Union" and few thoughtful people now doubt that some such goal must be the aim of our peace offensive. Nothing less drastic can achieve the "Collective Security" that is essential to the survival of civilisation. But the object of this book is not so much to review these conclusions¹⁰ as to investigate how the "Collective Security" failed us which we thought was provided by the League of Nations and the Covenant at the last settlement.

And let it be understood at the outset that the term "Collective Security" here used is not intended to cover merely the collective economic or military resistance of an aggressor. The Covenant stands for very much more than that. It seeks to establish a world system for the settling of disputes and the promotion of agreements when a dispute is not even in sight, to be used spontaneously by all the nations in forgetfulness as far as possible of the very existence of modes of keeping the peace by force. This whole spirit, as well as—before—

¹⁰ A representative one, by Sir William Beveridge, in *Peace by Federation?* must suffice here. Quoting the assertion that "Left to herself, Germany will always produce Hitlers," he says: "She cannot be left to herself. Germany cannot be allowed to have arms of her own, if Europe is to have security, but she cannot be left unarmed. There must be arms to protect Germany; ultimately, if not forthwith, they must be arms shared by her with others. She must be integrated into a European system—on the terms not of servitude but of partnership. When Germany is ready to return to civilisation, she must be embraced not as an enemy, but as a friend" (p. 10).

1919 and 1940: A Startling Contrast

any thought of forceful sanctions in its support, is properly labelled "Collective Security." The difference between heaven and hell is, in the last resort, the presence in heaven, and the absence from hell, of Collective Security: the League of Nations sought to establish it—as it shall yet be established—on earth.

The Betrayal of the League-of-Nations-Man

That section of public opinion which is accustomed to place international righteousness before national interests, and which regards resort to war for the furthering of merely national interests as the crime of crimes, was more profoundly shaken at the Munich crisis of September 1938 than at any time before or since, even than at the outbreak of war itself twelve months later or at the collapse of France after ten months of the war. For twenty years it was believed—at first confidently, and later more and more desperately—that the Covenant with which the World War ended ensured civilisation against having again to face Armageddon for the rescue of small nations from aggressors.

Thousands and thousands in every country must have become convinced Pacifists after the appalling experiences of the World War, but, because of the Covenant and the assurance it seemed to give, became instead League-of-Nations-men looking to the League to establish that "Collective Security" promised by the Covenant. They were willing to face the risk of the collective imposition of "sanctions," believing that it did not involve resort to anything like the massed horrors of war as we knew them in 1914-18.

But we had seen the Covenant break down in Manchuria, in Ethiopia, in Spain, in Albania, to say nothing of Austria, and there were prophets in abundance to say that if it came to a real contest with Nazi aggression the Covenant could not now possibly meet the strain that would be put upon it. Yet it took Munich to convince us that the prophets were right.

How had it happened? And what became of the belief that war need henceforth be retained only as a civilised weapon covering resort to the "sanctions" of the Covenant, for the maintenance of justice and right—the modern substitute for the all-in war of the past? There seemed no answer to these questions and absolute Pacifists multiplied, League-of-Nations-men diminished and wilted, and

The Betrayal of the League-of-Nations-Man

the Peace Army was riven from top to bottom. Was the disaster irreparable?

This book attempts in the first place an answer to these questions. It seeks to show just how and why the Covenant ceased for practical purposes to exist and to lay the disaster at the doors of those responsible for it—in democratic as well as in authoritarian countries. It is agreed that circumstances were against the great experiment, but it is sought to show here that they—the circumstances—were largely brought about by States Members of the League themselves, especially by France and Britain as well as by the authoritarian States, and largely through the deficient political vigilance of their peoples, abundant as their good will has been. These “circumstances” we may here provisionally summarise as follows:

1. The vindictive clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.
2. Poincaré's straining of those clauses in the invasion of the Ruhr.
3. The declining health and deaths of Stresemann and Briand at the crisis of the story, and surely also the vacation of office of Austen Chamberlain and Arthur Henderson and their replacement by—others.
4. The overwhelming depression, partly, at any rate, due to the mishandling by the statesmen, and the nationalist expedients everywhere to cope with it.
5. The steady ignoring of Article XIX: the treatment of the “Peace” Treaties as sacrosanct and the refusal to consider their revision in any respect, however obvious the mischief they might be working.
6. The successful calling by Japan of the bluff of sanctions desired by the smaller Powers but disapproved by the Great Powers when applied to one of their number.
7. French stubbornness in refusing to a reinstated Germany either the general disarmament promised by the Peace Treaty or the equal rearmament which was the inevitable sequel to such refusal.
8. The final surrender over Ethiopia to the menace from an alienated and rearmed Germany, backed by Italy and Japan, threatening the flank of the democratic Powers. And, as we have said,
9. The supineness of the electorates and their failure to detect and prevent the double dealing of their “statesmen.”

Granting that sanctions and the Collective Security based upon them became no longer practicable when once this surrender had

Why Another World War?

openly been made in such circumstances,¹ it will be insisted here, as history will insist, that these circumstances were predominantly the creation of those still in theory bound to the League (the last election in 1935 was fought by Ministers professing themselves to be League-of-Nations-men, see Chapter XIV) and of statesmen who never really believed in what they professed.

But it will be shown that there is more in it than that. Collective Security was ultimately to be backed by sanctions and sanctions were only thought of as a last resort if a nation here and there proved to be less responsive than they should be to the new spirit. The elaboration of Articles XV and XVI were pressed by France as an assurance, additional to the punitive provisions of the Peace Treaty, against an ultimately recovered Germany. The Poincarists, at any rate, felt little or no enthusiasm in any other connection—in the Far East, for instance, or for use on a possible ally against Germany, however peccant, like Italy—a fact which ought to rank among the “circumstances” summarised above unfavourable to the policy of security by sanctions.

But why, in a chastened world, did nationalistic aims, clearly conflicting with the general good, so soon and so largely replace the conceptions behind the Covenant? It is hoped to show here, in the second place, that it was because the League was worked—especially in the second decade of the League—not to diminish but to fortify the principle of national sovereignty. The Council and the Assembly—especially the Council in regard to the Great Powers among its members—were careful from the first to take no single step that suggested disrespect to the doctrine of State sovereignty. It has been seen how widely it is already recognised that this obsession regarding national sovereignty is the fact which will have to be tackled and overcome if peace is to follow this second war-to-end-war, and we shall have to review here, however briefly, the various schemes already put forward for the accomplishment of this aim.

And we have to inquire how, within the sovereign States themselves, we, the peace-loving peoples of Europe and of the world, can impose

¹ Mr. Eden, on February 12, 1938 (the year of Munich), reiterated his conviction that the League way was the right way, and he resigned eight days later “rather than abandon the policy of collective resistance to violent aggression. . . . It may well be that Czechoslovakia and the other victims of German aggression would have survived in peace if Mr. Eden’s policy of Collective Security had not been abandoned in February. But war must have resulted from a sudden return to this policy in September.”—Mr. Maxwell Garnett, in *A Lasting Peace*, pp. 120, 122.

The Betrayal of the League-of-Nations-Man

our will on the "statesmen" who have produced this *débâcle* by their unfaithfulness to the creed that all professed in 1920 and how we may reconstruct Collective Security on a surer basis, using our unanimity, overlapping the boundaries of sovereign States, as the weapon that will make even "sanctions" unnecessary to produce the *pax populi* which must be if we are not to perish.

Sooner or later—and the mutual slaughter cries to heaven the sooner the saner—we shall have to turn our thoughts from war to peace. Let us mark, then, first, how we failed after the last war, and then just what is needed to secure success in the new peace which must follow the present war, whether that war ends in "victory" or in a negotiated settlement or in stalemate.²

But what, meanwhile, about "the present war" itself into which we toppled a hectic twelve months after Munich, marking the failure not only of the policy of Collective Security but of the policy of "appeasement" which had been offered as a substitute; marking too during its progress the collapse of the seventy-year-old French Third Republic at our side, giving place to the Hitler-Pétain, Nazi-Fascist, model Totalitarian State. And what of the attitude of both the Pacifists and the League-of-Nations-men to this war after the toppling and now?

Some came to the decision that they must support this war both because of the menace of Nazism and because the Covenant, alive or dead, required us to come to the succour of the Poles, and, however belatedly, of the Czechs and the Austrians and now to the Danes, the

² "The problem can only be solved by applying reason to experience. If the problem is approached in this common-sense way, it is possible to predict that, if Europeans want peace, they must do certain things, and that if they do certain other things, they will get Hitlers and totalitarian war. . . . We have sufficient experience of society and government to be able in the year 1940, by using our reason on this experience, to tell Europeans what they must do if they want peace, but that does not mean that we believe that they will use *their* reason, do it, or obtain peace."—*The War for Peace*, by Leonard Woolf (Routledge), p. 244.

"The antagonisms now embroiling the human race have come down to us from a chaotic past, that has left us a heritage of divisions—races, nations, creeds, languages. . . . It is now commonly asked: If there be a God, and if 'God is Love,' why these wars, and the abominations they bring? The answer may be given that the reticence of God is His greatest boon to man. Were there intervention from moment to moment, or even if there were a revealed code of conduct with plain direction for every eventuality, man's freedom would be gone, and with it his greatest glory. . . . But the cosmic scheme throws him on his own resources. He has to learn that when he suffers it is through his own mistakes; if he would reap well, he must sow rightly."—Viscount Samuel in *The Deeper Causes of the War* (George Allen & Unwin), p. 74.

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Norwegians, the Dutch, the Belgians and the Greeks—and, whether they want it or not, to the French. But others, of divers former opinions, were driven to the decision on the outbreak of the war that they could not support a war which its architect explicitly assured them—when he gave the pledge to Poland which he withheld from (or broke to) Czechoslovakia—was to be waged because our vital interests, and *not* because Poland's, or any other small nation's, were threatened. Never again it seemed to these others could they support a war to restore "the balance of power" and in merely national interests, vital or otherwise. Never, above all, could they again share responsibility for compelling men and boys to go out to slaughter and be slaughtered on their behalf. Modern war methods, inflicted or sustained, were too atrocious for that responsibility to be taken ever again.

But again, when Holland and Belgium and above all France went down before the onslaught, these others were torn with doubt whether they could possibly say to their compatriots, however wrong war always was in their seeing, that these compatriots were wrong to stand with their backs to the wall and try to stop the horror which had overwhelmed Europe from overwhelming Britain—"freedom's last fortress."

I who write this book have been compelled to classify myself with those who first refused their support to the war beside Poland and those who secondly found themselves unable to rebuke the resistance of an invasion whose success would confirm the conquest of all Europe for Nazism. I have had since Munich to review my whole position in the course of a kind of intellectual pilgrimage, in advanced years, after an active, political life, after having from youth up rejected absolute Pacifism, believing it right to "fight for good causes." It has been—and is—a troublous pilgrimage, involving many painful searchings of heart and at times almost agonizing prayer, and it is not yet complete. The pilgrimage incidentally and by implication is recorded here both for the satisfaction of marshalling one's own experiences in their order and in the hope and belief that it may help other pilgrims who have only lately arrived breathless at the goal or are still painfully plodding along the stony road.

Two things stand out, for me, as the result so far of this process:

That force can never solve moral problems and its exercise with modern weapons can never be anything less than supremely wrong, however right the motives behind it seem to be; and

The Betrayal of the League-of-Nations-Man

That the most "absolute" Pacifism cannot absolve the Christian citizen from his duty to help to his utmost the building of the new world order—under an agreement, if necessary, to differ as to how far, if at all, force will ultimately be found the necessary ultimate sanction.

So the concluding part of this book reviews the various plans for the new world order, in which Pacifists and Non-Pacifists alike must help, based upon the prior analysis of the world's experience, particularly of the last quarter of a century.

We must begin, then, in reviewing this experience, with the outbreak of the World War in 1914, and the reaction to that great—that bewildering—shock to a generation grown up in the midst of the Pax Britannica, reactions that were exactly shared by countless peaceful and well-meaning citizens in every country. And because my own experiences at that time must be largely typical I shall record them in the first person singular.

"Our Ultimate Aim" in the World War

In July 1914 I spent my holiday with my wife in "touring the Baltic"—beginning at Copenhagen, crossing to Gothenberg, by the canal to Stockholm, across to Finland, a hundred miles north from Helsingfors and back through lakes and locks and on to St. Petersburg, and so home by sea. We talked in Finland about Finland with Swedish Swedes, Finnish Swedes and Finns. Merchants and peasants looked over their shoulders before recounting to us the tyrannical doings of Russia and the Russians. "What hope is there," I said, "of your getting free?" "We shall be free," was the reply, "at the next European war."

At Helsingfors we heard of the strikes in the industrial islands of the Neva and the methods employed in suppressing it, but before we renewed our journey we were assured that "order reigned" once more in Petersburg. To our excited imaginations St. Petersburg seemed a city of silence—and of gendarmes. No politics here, even in whispers! We were glad to leave. But grey Russian cruisers escorted our steamer down the Gulf, under the frowning guns of Kronstadt, oppressing us with the terrible might of the autocracy.

And then, at Copenhagen again, we heard that there was to be a war on behalf of democratic freedom and that Britain and Russia were to be on the same side! All through that Sunday afternoon, August 2nd, making our way slowly through disorganized traffic from Hull to Manchester, we were talking with other returned tourists who had just been able to escape from Germany in time; but these did not obliterate the memory of silent Petersburg, though two years later I was privileged to help in the welcome of the same Russian cruisers on a visit to Liverpool—cruisers owing allegiance to Kerenski's Government. Democracy was winning after all!

In my youth I was taught by my father, a Unitarian minister, to execrate Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria or Armenia and to believe it was Christendom's duty to "stop" them; and I remember being irked later by family ties that forbade me to volunteer for service against the Turk in Crete! We believed too that Lincoln was right in going

"Our Ultimate Aim" in the World War

to war to free the slave, but we abhorred the wars of national aggrandisement or to preserve "the balance of power" in Europe. Britain should only fight for freedom, and my father preached, and I wrote, against the Imperialism of the Boer War throughout its length.

So it was a shock, on my return from my Baltic holiday, to find Britain on the brink of a war between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente and on the side of the oppressors of the Finns. And on that critical Monday and Tuesday I threw myself into the protest against war that was hastily being organised.

But then came the German invasion of Belgium. In agony of soul I accepted the decision of August 4th: the bully must be withstood. But the Lord's Prayer stuck in my throat at church on the following Sundays and I felt I could not look the exalted volunteers for enlistment in the face. I spoke for myself and for many others when I said:¹

We had settled down as best we could into the new orientation of our religion, made what terms we could, individually and collectively, with this thing we have found ourselves compelled to do. We had had to make up our minds whether we did or did not believe that force—the aggression of force—must be resisted by force. We came to divers conclusions. Those of us—and I among them—who made up our minds that at this stage in our civilisation we *must* repel force by force had to make up our minds, saying that, how we stood to the Founder of our religion. And many of us said—nurtured as we are in the tradition of sincerity and simplicity—that we would not attempt to say that what we had decided we must do was in consonance with the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. We had to make up our minds that we must say in grief and humility that in this thing here and now we disagreed with our Master.

But disagreeing on this point, the ethical point of our relation to force, we surely strove all the harder to stem any alienation, any differentiation, in any other direction from the teachings in which we had been nurtured. . . . We would not *hate* our enemies though we fought them. We would not seek out how we could believe the worst and most terrible stories about what they were doing. . . . And this, too, surely we resolved, that we would watch and pray for the moment when we could turn away from this work of forcible resistance and take up the nobler weapons of warfare—the weapons of the mind, the weapons of the spirit—in the certainty that force cannot itself achieve spiritual results.² . . .

¹ Presidential Address to the Provincial Assembly of Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers and Congregations of Lancashire and Cheshire, June 17, 1917.

² Force is a negative thing and can be used only to resist force so long as force remains to be resisted; but all the positive things, all the ideal things, all the high and noble things

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One thing [then] let us beware of if we wish to retain any hold upon our Christian principles. Let us beware of continuing this war after the things that we profess to have set out to attain have become attainable. Let us beware of the insidious word "punishment." Let us recognise its kinship to that word of the devil, "revenge." And let us say that this thing we will *not* do—we will not, under any pretext of punishment, continue for our people or for our enemies this awful slaughter for one moment after the vindication of those things for which we set out in this war has come within our grasp.³

And so I gave myself doggedly to the attempt, according to my opportunities, to elucidate what we were fighting for. "A clearer understanding was needed, both at home and abroad, of our ultimate aim in the war if the aim was to be achieved and an unnecessary prolongation of the conflict avoided." So in my book, *Our Ultimate Aim in the War*,⁴ I contended that "to be prepared for peace in time of war is at least as important as to be prepared for war in time of peace. If the peace when it comes is to be stable and effective it must be a peace which has been thought out in all its bearings." And I suggested details of such a peace—it may be called "a League of Nations peace."⁵ Conquest was erected then as now into an end in itself and not merely a means to an end. Or conquest was declared to be the only possible means to the end men had in view—the achievement of military security.⁶ For the people who said this the history of the world had proved in vain that military security was a thing that had no existence, and never had existed, and that the more thorough the beating which

which we hope, one day or another, to get as a sequel to this war, these are things to be got by the work of the mind and of the spirit. If the use of the sword proceeds one moment longer than is necessary for the achievement of its own peculiar, limited work, then the sword is getting in the way of, is hindering and even destroying, the higher work which we have before us.—The same.

³ See Appendices I & II, below.

⁴ George Allen and Unwin, 1916 (remainders at Essex Hall), p. 16.

⁵ Indeed reviewers asserted that I was the first writer who saw (April 1916) that a new world order was an essential component of a peace containing any lasting solution of the conflict then proceeding. See Appendix II, below.

⁶ Mr. Bernard Shaw, writing during the World War, ventured to prophecy that "if the present war should end in a decisive victory for either side, that victory will be used and abused to the uttermost in spite of the Bismarcks, to say nothing of the moderate men and Pacifists, so vainly urging a friendly settlement whilst the combatants go steadily on fighting for the strongest position at the finish, and most certainly not fighting for it with any intention of foregoing an inch of it when it is gained."—In an Introduction to *International Government: Two Reports* by L. S. Woolf Prepared for the Fabian Research Department (George Allen & Unwin), p. xiv.

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one war had achieved the more peremptory in the sequel had been the need of more repression and more violence for the military security of the victor. (P. 211.)

I tried to show (p. 21):

I. That war, as war, cannot by itself bring security for peace.

II. That, on the other hand, certain political arrangements on lines laid down by Mr. Asquith himself (Dublin speech, September 25, 1914), or arising out of them, have a very good chance of doing so.

III. That there is a good prospect of the German people becoming themselves convinced that some such arrangements are to be desired in their own interest as well as in the interest of the world at large.

IV. That the most formidable obstacle to their arrival at that conviction would be a declared intention on our part to continue the war to the point of absolute conquest, irrespective of their willingness or unwillingness to agree to such arrangements.

V. Finally, that to continue the war beyond the point at which arrangements become acceptable would be not only a colossal folly but a yet more colossal crime.

I advocated a treaty among all the combatants binding each to come to the support of the rest with its whole naval and military resources in the event of any one of them being attacked by any other without resort first to arbitration or conciliation, or in contravention of the terms of peace. But

it is not to be supposed that it would be possible, or desirable, for the Allies to fling at the head of Germany, as condition of peace, a cut-and-dried Constitution of Europe—legislative, administrative and judicial—on the lines discussed or on any other lines. Such a Constitution must be the joint work of the constituent nations, elaborated not amid the distractions of war but in the calm atmosphere of peace—without delay but also without haste. All that can be embodied in the actual terms of peace is the acceptance of general principles with guarantees for their ultimate execution (p. 196).

Who could have supposed that a League of Nations already furnished with a full constitution and elaborate rules would be flung at Germany's head embodied in a dictated Peace Treaty no word or comma of which must be altered and of which Germany and her Allies were not even to be members till many years later? But that is to anticipate.

My book was followed up through the months and years before the

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Armistice by booklets and pamphlets⁷ pressing the same point of view, and of course many other writers—some of world celebrity—were doing the same: it is one of my greatest happinesses in life to have been at their side.

⁷ *Peace with Security; Russia's Idea of Peace; The World's New Hope; The Churches and the Coming Peace.*

CHAPTER IV

The Fourteen Points and the Covenant

So, of course, all those who hoped for such a peace as I outlined in *Our Ultimate Aim* rejoiced greatly in President Wilson's leadership—or apparent leadership—of “the Allied and Associated Powers” waging the war and at the same time talking of the peace which should follow. We saw in his “Fourteen Points,” “Four Principles,” “Four Ends” and “Five Conditions” the essentials of the new order that must be:

A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike. (Point XIV.)

Each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent. (Principle I.)

Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interests and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims among rival States. (Principle III.)

The establishment of an organisation of peace which shall make it certain that the combined power of free nations will check every invasion of right and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit and by which every international readjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the people directly concerned shall be sanctioned. Or in a single sentence, What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organised opinion of mankind. (End IV.)

The impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that plays no favourites and knows no standards but the equal right of the several peoples concerned. (Condition I.)

There can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations. (Condition III.)

d we thought that Wilson, with the help of Mr. Lloyd George, and

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their predominant power in the forces of the victors, would be able to impose a just peace on victors and vanquished alike. Fate seemed to be playing into our hands when a new German Government, speaking for a popular Parliament, sued for peace, saying that

The German Government accepts, as a basis for the peace negotiations, the programme laid down by the President of the United States in his Message to Congress of January 8, 1918 [the Fourteen Points], and in his subsequent pronouncements, particularly in his address of September 27, 1918 [the Five Conditions].

Dishonest attempts have been made to deny that the Allies promised to base the Peace Treaties on the Fourteen Points. Yet the Allies, in their reply to this feeler, specifically

declared their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the lines of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress in January 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses.

They withdrew only Point II of the Fourteen Points, but they laid ominous emphasis on the various passages in other Points declaring that

invaded territories must be restored, as well as evacuated and made free. . . . By it they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civil population of the Allies, and to their property, by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.

We know the sequel. There were no peace negotiations; the blockade by the British Fleet continued, for nine months *after* the surrender at the Armistice which left the enemy powerless, while the Allies slowly drew up their dictated peace, till our occupying forces insisted on sharing their rations with the German women and children among whom they were billeted and whom we were slowly starving—a blacker crime than the whole of the submarine campaign.¹ Vindictiveness after all beat down generosity at Versailles as if there had been no change at all from military autocracy in Germany to a Government of the People only intent on the struggle to survive the disaster that the autocracy had brought them, we, through the months and

¹ In the maternity hospitals in Berlin in 1919 98 per cent of the babies did not survive. See also Appendix III, p. 206, below.

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the years, as determinedly struggling to hold them down. As Mr. Middleton Murry says:²

When a democracy ceases to be inspired, however crudely and roughly, by the spirit of Christ; when it spews the coals of fire out of its mouth, and tramples on a beaten enemy not in an access of rage (for that is human) but in a spirit of craven fear; when it starves the enemy's little ones after he has surrendered, and strives to break his will to live; when it makes of the beaten country one vast concentration camp, which it abandons only because it costs too much to superintend—why, then democracy becomes not barbaric, but something new in the history of the human race: something new, and therefore impossible to describe: a Christian society which has reverted, and bears the mark of its apostasy upon it.

But the vindictiveness and injustice of Versailles *was* accompanied by the Covenant of the League of Nations. On that, we thought, we could (or must try to) build up a new order. Was there not Article XIX for the revising of unjust treaties implemented by the invincible power of world opinion which should override the spite of the victors and vanquished alike? We saw that the more terribly we realised through the years and the decades the folly and wickedness of the dictated peace—dictated by victors drunk with success and with judgment warped by resentment against those who had challenged and resisted them—the more determined must we be to secure through the Covenant that such a peace—and such a war—should never be possible again.

For thus said the Covenant (I have inserted the text of these clauses because only by keeping them fresh in our minds can we realise the backsliding and the apostasy that followed during the next twenty years):

The high contracting parties in order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law and the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another, agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations. (*The Preamble.*)

1. The Council shall formulate plans for the reduction of national armaments. (*Article VIII.*)

The members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as

² In *The Price of Freedom* (Student Christian Movement Press), p. 181.

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against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League. (Article X.)

Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any member of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of Nations. (Article XI.)

The members of the League agree that if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture they will submit the matter either to arbitration or to inquiry by the Council and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the report by the Council. (Article XII.)

The members of the League agree that, wherever any dispute shall arise between them which they recognise to be suitable for arbitration and which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy they will submit the whole subject-matter to arbitration. (Article XIII.)

If there should arise between members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration in accordance with Article XIII, the members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council.

The Council shall endeavour to effect a settlement of the dispute and if such efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement.

If the dispute is not so settled, the Council shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto.

If a report of the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report. (Article XV, paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 6.)

Should any member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants above it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the prevention of all financial, commercial and personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State whether a member of the League or not.

It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.

The members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this article. (Article XVI, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.)

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The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world. (Article XIX.)

Let us see just what these measured resolves of the assembled Governments at Versailles seemed to imply—*did* imply, however unfaithful those Governments proved through the years that followed. They seemed to voice the conviction of the nations that a better method than war must be sought—indeed had been found—that the marshalling of world opinion would prove in practice irresistible and that if ever public opinion were defied a world boycott must inevitably settle the issue. The world that survived—just survived—four years of a struggle more intense than history ever recorded before, in its quivering breathing after that experience, was agreed that the whole human race would act as one man to defeat utterly any treacherous attempt to return to the self-seeking use of force against the solemn resolve to maintain the world at peace.² So we formed and joined League of Nations Unions, learned off the Covenant by rote—and waited.

² If we are tempted to wonder, in the light of subsequent history, why some of the national Governments joined the League, perhaps the dictum of Mr. Shaw's "Senior Judge of the Court of International Justice at The Hague," in his play *Geneva* (Constable) may or may not prove too intolerably cynical:

"SIR ORPHEUS MIDLANDER: But surely such a procedure was never contemplated when the Powers joined the League?"

"THE SENIOR JUDGE: I do not think anything was contemplated when the Powers joined the League. They signed the Covenant without reading it, to oblige President Wilson. The United States then refused to sign it to disoblige President Wilson, also without reading it. Since then the Powers have behaved in every respect as if the League did not exist, except when they could use it for their own purposes.

"SIR ORPHEUS MIDLANDER: But how else could they use it?"

"THE SENIOR JUDGE: They could use it to maintain justice and order between the nations" (p. 40).

CHAPTER V

To Make Security Doubly Secure

The first great blow to our optimism—the greatest in the first ten of the twenty years under review—was, of course, the rejection of the Peace Treaties, including the Covenant, by the American Senate on March 19, 1920. The Senate, owing to its unequal constituencies, each State, large or small, sending two Senators, and other causes, is not so representative as the House, and the Covenant, even so, was only rejected through the rule that a two-thirds majority is required for the ratification of a treaty. The actual figures were fifty-three for the Treaty to thirty-seven against—six votes too few for the purpose. The Senate is the stronghold of conservatism in America and there was a powerful tradition working against the League idea—isolation from European politics. Wilson had his enemies and he was not exactly tactful in his dealings with them. In an attempt to reverse the decision at the presidential elections in the following autumn the candidate of the Democratic Party (to which Wilson belonged) was beaten by the Republicans by a majority of seven millions and they also obtained solid majorities in both Houses of Congress. So “isolationism” triumphed finally so far as that generation was concerned.

But we need not accept the cynical dictum of Shaw’s International Judge:¹ Sir Arthur Salter quotes² a passage from an article of Mr. Walter Lippmann in *Foreign Affairs* (American) of July 1937, which sheds light on much also besides the rejection of the Covenant—the issue in America in regard to the present war, for instance:

The instinctive feeling of almost all Americans [says Mr. Lippmann] is to keep Europe at arm’s length. It is not true to say that the philosophy of isolationists is the selfishness and timidity of a people blessed with geographical security. The philosophy of isolation has its roots in the protective instincts of a people who cannot hope to fuse as a nation if they are not secure against the passions of their European ancestors. The theory of neutrality which crystallised in American minds during the nineteenth century was entertained in a world in which Great Britain exercised unchallenged supremacy over the principal maritime highways. It was assured that in time of war Britain would be mistress

¹ Footnote on page 31 above.

² In *Security* (Macmillan), p. 34.

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of the seas, that her fleet would successfully bottle up the war in a relatively small area, so that underneath all controversies, the predominance of British sea power was not challenged. On the contrary it was tacitly assumed.

The international world in which the American nation matured and conceived its native policy was a world in which Britain controlled the seas. The visible, the unexamined and unrecognised premise of American isolation has always been an international system in which naval power in British hands is predominant over all military power. The whole conception of isolation presupposes an international power so great that it can restrain all military conquerors. Such an international system existed in the century between Waterloo and the Marne, and all our preoccupations about world politics implicitly assume the continuance of such a system. A fatal blow struck at the heart of the British power would not merely destroy the international unity of the Empire; it would mean the destruction of all international order as we know it.

We have only to imagine our own position if the British supremacy were to collapse under an attack by Germany in the North Atlantic, by Italy in the Mediterranean, by Japan in the Western Pacific. All that is familiar and taken for granted, like the air we breathe, would be drastically altered. Thus, though it is no doubt written in the book of fate that Britain will no longer carry on alone the authority she exercised in the nineteenth century, it is also written in that book that our civilisation is doomed to another dark age unless that authority can be perpetuated by people who intend to live by the same political tradition. The great question is whether a nation placed as we are, and desiring above all else to live and let live, can preserve its isolation if there is no power in the world which preserves the order of the world.

The answer to that question is, I am convinced, that we can and will stand aside only as long as we feel that there is no fatal challenge to the central power which makes for order in our world. Our unconscious wisdom is the deposit of a century of experience. In that century of American isolation an organic and inseparable connection was formed between the life of the American nation and an international order held together through supreme authority exercised by men who in great matters think as we do. We cannot break that connection. We could not break it in 1917. We have declared that we cannot break it in 1937. We shall not break it. In the final test, no matter what we wish now or now believe, though collaboration with Britain and her Allies is difficult and often irritating, we shall protect that connection because in no other way can we fulfil our destiny.

The most immediately felt result of America's decision was the French loss of the joint guarantee of America and Britain against further aggression from Germany that had been proposed as a part of

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the settlement by President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George. A French publicist (Auguste Gauvain), writing on "Security"³ in 1926, said that when "the problem of security confronted the Allies immediately after the Armistice of November 11, 1918,"

Germany's military capitulation [had] put an end to hostilities and permitted the victors to impose their conditions of peace on the vanquished. The sum of these conditions was to constitute a guarantee of the new European status and of the peace of the world. But it inevitably involved painful readjustments and burdensome obligations for the conquered party. It was, therefore, necessary to find a system to guard against wars of revenge. The League of Nations was formed for this purpose.

And during the proceedings at the Peace Conference, France, as M. Gauvain sees it, considered that the Covenant "did not establish sufficiently rapid, precise and energetic practical sanctions against a possible aggressor":

Clemenceau and Marshal Foch would have wished France's security to be guaranteed by fixing the Western frontier of Germany on the Rhine, and by forming the German territories on the left bank of the Rhine into an independent buffer State.

When this could not be secured

Clemenceau ended by accepting the offers of Lloyd George and President Wilson, which substituted for the political and military Rhine frontiers two treaties stipulating that if Articles 42, 43 and 44 of the Treaty of Versailles relative to the demilitarisation of the left bank of the Rhine "may not at first provide adequate security and protection to France," Great Britain (or the United States as the case might be) pledges herself "to come immediately to her assistance in the event of any unprovoked movement of aggression against her being made by Germany."

When America rejected this treaty with the Covenant, and the British treaty, being carefully tied up with the American, became null and void also, France persisted in her demands (notably at Cannes in 1922) through the years till the sagacity of Sir Austen Chamberlain contrived to combine the demand with an offer of the reformed Germany and so drew up the Locarno Pact, but more of that hereafter.

Meanwhile at Geneva efforts for the increase of "security" were being made on the same lines, i.e. by increasing the peremptoriness

³ In the Supplementary Volumes (Vol. III, p. 498) constituting the Thirteenth Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

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and immediateness of the support by the covenanted nations to come to the aid of the victim of an aggressor. And so we had successively the "Treaty of Mutual Assistance" and the "Protocol of Genève for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes," both of them successively destroyed by successive British Governments in successive years—1924 and 1925—Mr. MacDonald because he did not like the principle of special regional treaties and Mr. Baldwin because he did not like the world-wide obligations that replaced them.

Efforts were then switched over into the securing of a multitude of bilateral treaties for mutual assistance and for arbitration—efforts powerfully helped by the signature of the Kellogg Pact in 1928 by practically every Government within and without the League of nations. Article I of this Pact condemns "recourse to war for the solution of international controversies" and renounces war "as an instrument of national policy," and Article II "agrees that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts shall never be sought except by pacific means." By 1938 there were over four hundred new arbitration treaties or treaties with arbitration clauses. Over three hundred of these are treaties for Pacific Settlement of International Disputes.

Witness, in 1933, a network of non-aggression and conciliation treaties between Soviet Russia and her neighbours, Afghanistan, Esthonia, Latvia, Iran, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, between Turkey and some of the Baltic States, and, on the other side of the world, between Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay.

These Treaties of London contain a careful definition of the aggressor. "Difficult though it may be to determine the aggressor, it is not an impossibility," M. Briand declared to the Eighth Assembly in 1927; "aggression has a way of betraying itself."

A special League Arbitration Committee was at work, 1927–29, in the provision of more effective and simpler machinery to meet at once all and any disputes arising between States. In 1928 it produced a number of Model Treaties, some bilateral, some "all inclusive," which States have since adopted; and, at the same time, one known as "the General Act," which is in effect a treaty providing, in the last resort, for compulsory settlement of every kind of international quarrel.

By the close of 1937 the International Treaty for Peaceful Settlement bound twenty-three States, including the members of the British Empire, France, Italy and Spain.⁴

⁴ From *What the League Has Done* (League of Nations Union), pp. 37, 38.

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Yet all this immense amount of faithful work for peace, strengthening the Covenant seemingly at every point, did not prevent the Covenant's breakdown. Why? All the aggressors from 1932 to 1940 were apparently bound hand and foot by arbitration treaties, general and bilateral, which they brushed aside without as much as an apology. M. Gauvain said that the Covenant, planned to "guard against wars of revenge," "did not establish sufficiently rapid, precise and energetic practical sanctions against a possible aggressor." Yet we shall find that in regard to Manchuria and Ethiopia months elapsed, after the aggressor had disclosed himself as nakedly as could be, in which the sanctions contemplated in Article XVI could have been imposed and could undoubtedly have checkmated the aggressor, and though the invasion of Spain was less blatantly advertised beforehand (it was no surprise for those who could observe the symptoms) it was so gradual that sanctions here too could easily have been imposed. We shall be driven to the conclusion that the Covenant broke down not because of inadequate machinery but because of a refusal to use it effectively, a refusal initiated in nearly every case, actively or passively, by Great Britain, supported by France, actively or passively, though eagerly in the first two cases and uneasily and unhappily (at least in the earlier months) in the third.

The Protocol of Geneva, of which Mr. MacDonald and M. Herriot were the godfathers, was founded, as M. Herriot said at Geneva, on the three principles of arbitration, security and disarmament, security in this restricted sense meaning the assurance that if arbitration was refused or disregarded the covenanting States would bring their armaments to bear in support of those of the victim, in overwhelming proportion to those of the aggressor. But for years disputes continued as to which of these three—arbitration, security or disarmament—should be given precedence in peace machine-building and in the discussions as to plans for peace machine-building. How could one disarm before being sure of adequate outside help for security? How, on the other hand, could the best outside help be adequate if the possible aggressor did not first disarm? And unless a complete system of arbitration were first established how could one name the aggressor *or* disarm *or* promise assistance? We shall find that so late as May 1933, at the Disarmament Conference—eight years after the rejection of the Protocol at the instance of Mr. Baldwin—the French were wishing to discuss security before disarmament but accepted a compromise

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under which security and "effectives" (man power) were to be discussed at alternative sessions!

But to return to M. Gauvain, who said that the League of Nations was formed for "finding a system to guard against wars of revenge." To put it at the lowest, that was not a very wise thing to say. The vanquished nations of 1918, and many neutrals as well, persisted in thinking of the League as an instrument of the victors for their continued subjection. (The Articles of the Covenant were the first twenty-six Articles of the Treaty of Versailles and its sister treaties, and the remaining Articles of the treaties were numbered from Article XXVII onward.) The view was vigorously disclaimed by the spokesmen of the victors at Geneva and perhaps M. Gauvain's naïve statement of fact from the French point of view helps to account for the stubborn disbelief.

So hampering was this conviction felt to be even eighteen years after the establishment of the League that the Assembly of September 1938 adopted a series of amendments of the text of the Covenant excluding passages and phrases showing its origin as an integral part of the treaties. For instance, in the Preamble, instead of saying "the High Contracting Parties"—i.e. the signatories of the treaties—"agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations," it is to say simply, "This Covenant has been adopted"; and Article I is to lose its first paragraph adopting an annexed list of "original Members" of the League, while Paragraph 2 (becoming Paragraph 1), instead of beginning "Any fully self-governing State, Dominion or Colony not named in the Annex may become a Member," is to read simply, "not being a Member of the League." And so on throughout the Covenant. It is hoped that this procedure, if confirmed by the Governments of the States Members of the League, will be regarded everywhere as lifting the Covenant out of the treaties and establishing it on its own independent legs. We were too busy over Munich to notice this significant action at the time. Not enough States Members had yet ratified the changes to bring them into effect at the last report, but there they are.

Yet the quotation from M. Gauvain throws light on more than the wide suspicion arising from the origin of the Covenant. It helps us to understand the whole history of the efforts to "strengthen" the Covenant which occupied the League sittings for the first ten years of its history, as we have seen. France and her allies (President Wilson's Third "Condition" forbade—very wisely—any "alliances or special

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covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations") had had their revenge on Germany at Versailles: Germany must be prevented from beginning a war of revenge for Versailles by the part of the "system" called the League of Nations.

It will be remembered that Article XIX of the Covenant provided that

The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconstruction by members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.

But French opinion denounced with something like fury the idea that the League should revise—or advise the revision of—any part of the Treaty of Versailles or of the other treaties affecting her Allies under this provision. It would be to use one integral part of the "system" to injure that other part so firmly constructed in the penal clauses to "guard against wars of revenge." Yet the failure to use Article XIX for the correction of what time had proved to be the mistakes of Versailles is a major tragedy of history. Even Mr. Chamberlain, when involved in the perplexities of the Sudeten German claims, naïvely wondered (on September 28, 1938) why Article XIX had not smoothed out the problem long ago. Well, he had been in Parliament since before the establishment of the Covenant and in the Cabinet almost continuously since 1923, and was a brother of a Foreign Secretary, so he ought to have known if anyone did!

Suppose that Article XIX had been used to ascertain by plebiscite whether Austrians should be excluded by treaty from the German Reich, whether Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia desired to be included in the Reich, whether Germans, White Russians, Ukrainians and Jews wished to remain in the reconstituted Poland or to join elsewhere—how utterly different recent problems would have been. But the Treaty of Versailles was sacrosanct, so it waited till it crumbled under the rude hand of Hitler, who cared nothing about plebiscites except as a possible convenient counter (when under his own control) in an argument. The plebiscites would have had to be taken in Stresemann's time, not Hitler's. But then no one foresaw Hitler, though he certainly cast his shadow before him.

I have said that the Poincarists, at any rate, in France, showed little or no enthusiasm for the sanctions embodied in Article XVI in any

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other connection than their possible use against Germany. Mr. Chamberlain spoke of them in 1936 as applied to Italy over Ethiopia as "the very midsummer of madness," but we have already seen that Mr. Baldwin rejected the Protocol in 1925 because he disliked its worldwide commitments. His Government persistently strove to minimize the Covenant commitments and Mr. Chamberlain whittled them down to the theory that a victim of aggression need not look to Britain for help unless Britain's own "vital interests" were also involved.⁵ Yet the whole idea of the Collective Security of the Covenant was that the defence of all was the defence of each. It is because we betrayed this principle that we are now fighting the greatest aggression of modern history with the help only (for a time) of the aggressing nation's great hereditary enemy, France.

⁵ See Chapter XXI below.

CHAPTER VI

The German Policy of Fulfilment: Locarno

But we must turn now from Geneva to Berlin and see how Germany reacted to all this. When a German Government had been found which would sign and ratify—under the most strenuous protest—the dictated Treaty of Versailles, President Ebert circulated a message in which he announced that

We shall honestly endeavour to fulfil our engagements towards the Entente according to the Peace Treaty, but if there are clauses which prove to be absolutely unrealisable, we must hope that the Entente will understand this and be able to meet us in our difficulties.

The next fourteen years were occupied in this endeavour and in first the refusal and then the grudging acceding of such meeting of difficulties, and we shall have to trace how the down-and-out Germany of Versailles ultimately forsook “the Policy of Fulfilment” for the Policy of Defiance.

Take first the thorniest subject of all—“reparations.”

President Wilson’s Fourteen Points on which the Armistice was negotiated, said the invaded territories must be “freed,” “evacuated” and “restored.” (Points VII, VIII and XI.)

In agreeing that the Treaty of Peace should be based on the Fourteen Points the Allies told Germany, as we have seen (p. 28), that by “restoring” they understood that

Compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies, and to their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea and from the air.

This had grown in the text of the Treaty itself (Part IX) to this:

The Allies affirm and Germany must accept for herself and her allies responsibility for all loss and damage to Allied States and citizens due to the war imposed on them by the enemy’s aggression. While they recognise that she cannot pay the total bill, Germany must compensate civilians for personal injuries, air raids, U-boat crimes at sea and the like, forced labour, levies, fines, maltreatment of prisoners, damage

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to civilian property, and *the capitalised value of pensions and allowances*. Germany must guarantee to pay Belgium's war debt by a 5 per cent gold bond issue.

It was the "capitalised value of pensions and allowances"—pensions of ex-soldiers or their dependants and separation allowances for their wives and children—that made the total finally and obviously impossible of payment. Neither the Fourteen Points nor the Armistice expounding of them contained the slightest hint of these—neither did they of the payment of the war debt of Belgium. The pensions and allowances were thrown in at the instance of Mr. Lloyd George to give the British Empire, which had *not* been invaded, a larger share of reparations pie.

It took the Allied Supreme Council, on recommendations from a Reparation Commission, till January 1921 to arrive at the total represented by these damages. For damage alone the claims totalled £5,000,000,000, but including "other claims" the total was about £11,000,000,000.

On April 27, 1921, the Reparation Commission announced their "assessment" as 132 milliard gold marks (6,600 million sterling, or 58 per cent of the claim). The decision did not refer to Germany's "capacity to pay" at all—it was a computation of legal liability, on the terms of the Treaty. The Allies decided that this was to be paid in annuities of £100,000,000, plus 26 per cent of German exports.

On this report the London Conference issued an ultimatum (May 5, 1921), giving effect to those decisions and also deciding that deliveries of coal and materials, etc., were to continue, Germany being given credit for the appropriate value. A Committee of Guarantees was to be set up to report upon the German fiscal revenues and to supervise the actual machinery for delivering funds, etc. Occupation of the Ruhr Valley and penalties in regard to customs and other revenues were proposed in case Germany failed to accept the terms.¹

Germany protested at Spa (July 1920) that it was necessary for her first to secure an export surplus before she could make any payments in cash or kind, but the Allied experts (of that date) had no use for this kind of talk. They fixed annuities and told Germany to pay them. Germany cleared out all her ready resources at home and abroad to pay the first instalment and then asked for a moratorium. After fruitless negotiations the Allies occupied Duisburg, Ruhrort and Dusseldorf

¹ Account by Sir Josiah Stamp (now Lord Stamp) of "Reparations," in the third Supplementary Volume constituting the Thirteenth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, p. 335.

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and drew a customs cordon between them and the rest of Germany; and at the end of 1922 France occupied the Ruhr Valley.

Poincaré (former French President, now Premier) came to the conclusion that Germany would only yield reparations if "productive pledges" were seized—if the Allies actually took the Ruhr districts and managed them for their own profit. But the population promptly went on strike and were maintained by the Government of the Reich for eight months. This necessitated unlimited inflation and the middle and working classes starved throughout Germany while immense individual fortunes were made. Meanwhile the French were trying to start a breakaway into an independent Rhineland State—the "Rhineland Republic" was actually proclaimed in October 1923, but soon faded away—and Hitler and Ludendorff were making trouble in Bavaria.

Then the scene changed dramatically. The Allies came to their senses and appointed the Dawes Committee on Reparations. Stresemann became Chancellor and Foreign Minister and afterwards Foreign Minister only under Marx with Luther as Finance Minister and Schacht as President of the Reichsbank, and finally the sensible old Hindenburg as President of the Reich on the death of Ebert. Passive resistance ceased in the Ruhr, the currency was stabilised and the Budget balanced. At Paris Poincaré gave place to Herriot and MacDonald reigned in London and expressed the hope that Germany would join the League of Nations. The Ruhr was evacuated and the Dawes Plan carried into effect.

In the Dawes Report it was politely explained to the Allies that

As long as the occupation of the Ruhr continued and Germany was not a complete fiscal unit, she had not entire control of her receipts and expenditure and there could be no guarantee of a balanced budget.²

Moreover,

The reparation liabilities under the Treaty figured among the budgetary expenses, and, if in excess of budgetary possibilities, made it impossible to guarantee that steps taken for the stability of the currency would be permanent and effective.

Still more elementary, as it seems now, it was pointed out that

There has been a tendency in the past to confuse two distinct though related questions, i.e. first the amount of revenue which

² The same.

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Germany can raise available for reparation account, and, second, the amount which can be transferred to foreign countries. The sums raised and transferred to the Allies on reparation account cannot, in the long run, exceed the sums which the balance of payments make it possible to transfer, without currency or budget instability ensuing.

So the Committee dealt first with "the problem of the maximum budget of surplus" and then with "the problem of payment to the Allies."

But the execution of the Dawes Plan was overtaken by the world depression of 1929-32 and the Dawes Plan was succeeded by the Young Plan (June 1929), which again cut down Germany's liabilities. The Allies' ultimatum of April 1921, it will be remembered, spoke of annuities of £100,000,000 but with 26 per cent (an immense proportion) of German exports. The standard *inclusive* Dawes annuity was £125,000,000. The Young schedule was a substantial reduction, particularly in the earlier years and did not even reach the Dawes figure in the maximum year. But by 1932 the Powers were prepared to face the inevitable solution of the nearly cleaned slate of international war debts, so ending this sorry story of how vindictiveness and greed, on the top of the wealth absolutely lost by destruction, nearly wrecked the former combatants in common ruin.³

Presiding at the Lausanne Conference on January 16th, Mr. MacDonald said:

We meet to-day under the shadow of the most ominous economic crisis which has ever affected the world in times of peace, and the whole world looks to us, as it has never looked to an international conference before, to find agreement which will help to put an end to its existing distress. None of us can stay out of the work of restoration and reconstruction, because none of us can stay out of the miseries which are gathering round about us.

If it is proved here that we have been pursuing policies in violation of the simplest of those economic laws which govern the prosperity

³ Mr. Maxwell Garnett (in *A Lasting Peace*) compiles from various sources a table of "present values" at the dates indicated of the proposed total reparations liability of Germany measured in gold pounds" from which I quote the following:

Britain proposed at the Peace Conference	£11,000,000,000
Mr. Keynes proposed	2,000,000,000
Germany proposed in 1921	2,500,000,000
Germany agreed to pay in 1924 under the Dawes Plan	..	2,445,000,000
Germany agreed to pay in 1929 under the Young Plan—		
Conditional payments	1,167,000,000
Unconditional payments	639,000,000
Germany agreed at Lausanne in 1932 to pay after three years		150,000,000

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of States or the necessary flow of international exchange, the maintenance of economic prices, and the ability of consumers to consume, every prompting of wisdom and common sense surely compels us to return to better ways without delay, and pay the temporary price which such a return will exact from us.

Engagements which have proved incapable of fulfilment must be revised by agreement. Both sides to all agreements must ever be ready to face facts, and among the facts which we have to consider are not only those of whether plans hitherto formulated have imposed impossible burdens, but whether and how they have contributed to the deplorable state in which the world now finds itself.

And thus we leave reparations. But it is interesting to note in the light of the above quotation that the British Government hastened away to Ottawa to open just five weeks later the Imperial Economic Conference to tie up Britain at home and the Britains Beyond the Seas more firmly than ever in a network of tariffs and quota restrictions.

The climax of the Policy of Fulfilment inherited by Stresemann from Ebert was reached when, while the British were still at Cologne, Stresemann published his offer of a guarantee of the frontiers of France and Belgium and an undertaking not to seek by military means to revise the Polish and Czechoslovakian frontiers. Sir Austen Chamberlain took up the offer and the Pact of Locarno was signed on October 16, 1925. France and Belgium on the one hand and Germany on the other mutually promised to respect the frontiers between them, with a guarantee *to both sides* by Britain and Italy that they would come to the assistance of the side which should ever be invaded by the other, while both sides also bound themselves never to go to war but to seek peaceable means of settlement of any dispute between them.

In the words of Stresemann himself,⁴

The document of Locarno is no prescription, merely needing the physician's signature, to allay the fever of mistrust. But in the last resort the prescription of Locarno will have to prove its efficacy by one fact alone: that no State shall ever again hold it necessary or even compatible with the Treaty to seek for the guarantee of its security by accumulating the machinery of violence on the territory of its neighbour. When that hour strikes, even those sections of German opinion which are still sceptical of Europe's miraculous healing from the spirit of destructiveness will no longer be able to stand aside

⁴ In his article on "Locarno, Pact of," in Volume II of the Supplementary Volumes comprising the Thirteenth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, pp. 723-24.

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Then will the whole German people engage its ambition to being outdistanced by none in peaceful co-operation for the welfare of Europe.

Germany was admitted to the League of Nations on her own application, with a seat on the Council, on September 1926, but the accumulation of the machinery of violence on German territory by her neighbours continued five years longer and Stresemann did not live to see the hour of Europe's miraculous healing from the spirit of destructiveness. The spirit of destructiveness was by that time too deeply inoculated and the disease was destined to work itself out in Europe's tortured body in steadily rising fever till the delirium of 1940 prostrated her once more.

But let it never be forgotten that Briand saw from the first that the Locarno Pact, plus Germany's admission to the League, plus the agreement on the Dawes Plan for Reparations, required in justice and logic the abrogation of the remaining sanctions—by handing over to the League the Allied supervision of German disarmament and by abandoning the Allied military occupation of German territory—and that in his long struggle to persuade his country to take the same view he was backed up successively by Austen Chamberlain and Arthur Henderson, the British Foreign Secretaries. But Poincaré was by then back in the saddle in Paris as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance—to stabilise the franc—and Briand's efforts were not finally successful for a fatal five years. Even then there remained the question of international disarmament to the level of the German disarmament foreshadowed in the Versailles Treaty and *that* question was settled *not* at Geneva but at Berlin with German unrestricted rearmament by Hitler when the Policy of Fulfilment was replaced by the Policy of Defiance, followed in due course by another European war.

CHAPTER VII

The German Policy of Fulfilment: Thoiry

But Briand made a spirited opening of his settlement campaign. On September 17, 1926, during the League Assembly at which Germany had been admitted, he appointed a meeting with Stresemann at an inn at Thoiry, seventy-five minutes over the border of France.

Herr Briand let me know through Professor Hesnard that he was going to propose to me that the occupation of the Rhineland should be wholly terminated, that the Saar should be given back to Germany, and military control abolished. He would begin the conversation by quite openly laying his cards on the table and explaining his views. Professor Hesnard asked me to reply with equal candour to the question that Briand would put to me—namely, whether we would in that case be ready to meet the economic needs of France in the matter of the issue of bonds. The political interview started according to plan.

Herr Briand began the interview with the expression of his conviction that partial solutions were useless, as always involving the possibility of danger in the future. His purpose was to discuss a comprehensive solution of all the questions at issue between Germany and France, and he asked me to say openly whether we could come to terms with France on the economic sphere, if this question should be solved. In this connection he was not merely thinking of the return of the Saar, but the termination of the entire Rhineland occupation.¹

At the conclusion of the interview, which lasted some hours, a plan was agreed upon which each statesman undertook to submit to his Cabinet. Stresemann said to Briand:

If our agreement comes into force, we will assist in the stabilisation of the French franc. I will do so gladly, for it is only in our interest that stable relations should subsist all over Europe. But I do not want to stabilise Poincaré. Don't you think that he may remain, if we now give him the chance, by taking these steps to maintain the franc?

BRIAND: I don't think Poincaré can last long, and regard his Cabinet merely as a transition Cabinet.²

¹ From a memorandum quoted in Volume III of *Gustav Stresemann: His Diaries, Letters and Papers*, edited and translated by Eric Sutton (Macmillan), pp. 17, 18.

² The same, p. 24.

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Poincaré lasted for three years and succeeded in that time effectively to discredit the Policy of Fulfilment in German eyes.

Stresemann from the first insisted that precedence must be given to the winding up of the Military Commission of Control under the Ambassadors' Conference with its peregrinations for the meticulous examination of forts and arms and factories, an utterly humiliating procedure for Germany and no longer necessary. Briand encountered opposition to this step from the French military authorities in view of the activities of the unofficial bodies such as the Stahlhelm (Steel Helmets) alleged to be supplementing the number of trained soldiers in the Reichswehr allowed by the Peace Treaty.

Stresemann told the Reichstag on October 5 (1926) that he had told M. Briand at Thoiry that

The Reichswehr Minister, Dr. Gessler, at a Plenary Session of the Reichstag, repudiated the idea of any connection between these Associations and the Reichswehr. Dr. Gessler also recalled that General Seecht had repeatedly emphasised that he was utterly opposed to any playing at soldiers by those who were not soldiers. But blunders in this connection grievously endangered the success of our foreign policy, and it is very regrettable that those who were the natural enemies of this policy—and it is the soldiers in France who are our wholehearted enemies—should be given definite weapons which they can use against Herr Briand in the discussions that will shortly take place.

—a significant argument. When the Policy of Defiance had replaced the Policy of Fulfilment Hitler industriously drilled the Stahlhelm and the Blackshirts and the Brownshirts too pending the establishment of conscription. Stresemann told the French Ambassador four days later:³

I must make it quite clear, in reply to false statements that had been put about in Germany, that I had not agreed in any way at Thoiry to the dissolution of these associations, that I had in fact given Herr Briand detailed information regarding the character of the Stahlhelm and the Jugdo, which showed that in regard to the more important associations the charges of military training were unfounded.

Stresemann nevertheless clearly thought the Thoiry policy—and more—was on the brink of fulfilment. In a speech to the Reichstag on November 23rd he said:

If I am justified in the assumption that we are now in the last phases of the disarmament negotiations, then allow me on this occasion to

³ The same, p. 58.

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address a word to those members of the Reichstag who took part in this business. I think that among the German people it has been far from adequately realised what demands of a spiritual nature—in the way of self-control and discipline—were made upon those who carried out this work with their own hands. When we remember that the rock of Heligoland was once a fortress in the sea, and was demolished by those who had established it; when we remember what Germany's army once was, and what it is to-day, I feel that the way in which this disarmament has been carried out, indicates a spirit in these troops and their officers which regards our age-long discipline and devotion to the State as above every kind of personal feeling.

This psychological feeling would not exist, and would not need to exist, if there were to be a general disarmament of all nations. Then it would be a work of peace. But as it is, it was a work of humiliation imposed on a nation, as against others who retained their power and their armaments. And for what was here achieved by the men who had thus to contend against their own feelings, I think that a word of thanks is due from this place to those who were their leaders.

But next day he told the British Ambassador that

If the German delegation came back from Geneva without any definite date having been fixed in this matter, they would have no further support in public opinion, and I should be faced with the question whether I could cover this policy with my name. The way that led from Locarno, through Geneva, to Thoiry—the conversation that took place there was, by the way, known to Herr Chamberlain and approved by him—was associated with my name, and I should be responsible before the German people for ensuring that it should produce the results expected by Germans. The question that must be settled first was that of military control and I asked him to tell Herr Chamberlain that an agreement must be reached on this point on the basis of the withdrawal of the Commission by a definite date.⁴

And Briand, carrying on the battle for Thoiry in *his* Parliament, said on November 29th:

Locarno was perhaps a premature attempt, but England has continued her guarantee, and many people have hitherto been of opinion that security as a whole depends on this guarantee. Well, we have this guarantee, are we suddenly to regard it as of no more value? It has been accounted to me as an infamy that at Geneva I admitted a certain greatness and nobility in our former foe. If that is a blunder, then I regard myself as honoured by having committed it. I firmly intend to do my utmost to prevent another clash between the nations, though in so doing I never lose sight of my anxiety for the security of France.

⁴ Note by Stresemann, p. 70 of the same.

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When the Allied control of Germans is replaced by the League control the security of France will not thereby be diminished, but even enhanced.

The result was that this view was ultimately so far accepted that at the December (1926) session of the League Council a "Protocol on Military Control" was adopted in which

It was first noted with satisfaction that an undertaking had been reached on the greater part of more than a hundred questions that had been a subject of dispute among the Governments named in July 1925 in connection with the fulfilment of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Only two questions are still unsettled; and there is every reason to hope that a settlement will be reached on these two questions also.⁵

So that Stresemann was able to tell the German Press on his return that

The Inter-Allied Military Control will be withdrawn on January 31, 1927. I would particularly remark that this withdrawal is unconditional. This is not embodied in a mere communiqué, but in a formal protocol signed by the British Foreign Minister, of which copies have been sent to the Powers concerned. The question of the evacuation of the Rhineland will no longer disappear from discussion. . . . We can [now] calmly say to our opposite numbers what is said to them by their own countrymen: Having gone to Geneva and Locarno you cannot remain on the Rhine, nor could you invite the Germans to Geneva, nor invite them to join the League Council, and assist in constituting an enduring peace among the nations, while leaving an army of occupation on the Rhine. This pledge, as Briand called it, will (in his own words) diminish in value from day to day.⁶

⁵ The Protocol continued: "In these circumstances the following agreement was reached: (1) The diplomatic discussion on the question of fortresses, and the question of war material, will be continued by the Ambassadors' Conference. New proposals will be made to further the discussion and assist its conclusion. (2) In the interval until a settlement is reached, all the work now proceeding on these fortresses, which is the matter of dispute, shall be suspended, without prejudice to the rights of the parties to maintain their claims as of right. (3) The Inter-Allied Military Control Commission will be withdrawn from Germany by January 31, 1927. From that day the terms of Article 213 of the Treaty of Peace will be applied, in accordance with the decisions taken by the Council of the League of Nations. (4) If by that day the questions indicated have not been brought, contrary to expectation, to a friendly solution, they shall be put before the Council of the League. (5) For all questions connected with the application of settlements reached, or yet to be reached, each of the Governments represented at the Ambassadors' Conference can attach a technical expert to its embassy in Berlin, who will be qualified to consult with the German authorities concerned.

⁶ The same, p. 79.

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But evacuation failed to follow.

Briand's speech in the Chamber, together with information which Stresemann had from Briand on the occasion of the meeting of the League Council at Geneva, made plain that Briand had not been able to get the French Cabinet to accept the plans which he had discussed with Stresemann during the conversation at Thoiry. . . . There was no official admission that the Thoiry plans had failed. . . . In 1928 Stresemann occasionally dwelt on the reasons for which Thoiry was a failure; and the following statement is from Stresemann's pen in February 1928:

"The German Government agreed at the time to the Thoiry proposals, a committee was constituted, consisting of the Finance Minister, the Minister for Economics, the Foreign Minister and the President of the Reichsbank, to discuss the details of the question. Their labours were suspended when it became clear from the French Press that as a result of economic developments in France, and the attitude of public opinion in America, the financial part of the Thoiry scheme was no longer acceptable, and in December of the same year, to our knowledge, the French Foreign Minister told his German colleague at Geneva that the ideas first exchanged at Thoiry could not then be further pursued."⁷

Ultimately, when the creditor Powers were discussing the distribution of reparation payments under the Young Plan at The Hague in the summer of 1929 Arthur Henderson said:

Most emphatically, as against the French view, that for him there was no connection between the Young Plan and the evacuation of the Rhineland, and that in all circumstances, no matter whether this Conference failed or not, the British Army would no longer remain on German soil. He was the first who, without any pressure on our [the Germans'] part, informed the whole Conference when he proposed to begin the evacuation, and when it would be at an end.⁸

But, said Stresemann,⁹ "I know Briand so well, he is terrified if he reads in the *Echo de Paris* that he is venturing too far." Yet by great pressure French reluctance was overcome and a programme of evacuation was agreed to which should end by June 30, 1930.

Stresemann addressed the League Council for the last time in September 1929:

For me one cardinal point of these results [at The Hague] I must speak to-day even before this high assemblage, as it is closely connected

⁷ The same, pp. 73, 74.

⁸ The same, p. 591.

⁹ The same, p. 592.

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with the basis of such an institution as the League, and the freedom and independence of its members. And that is the fulfilment of the German desire, now finally decided at The Hague, to see German territory freed from military occupation. . . .

Here too applies the admirable remark which the British Prime Minister lately uttered from this tribune. A political agreement offers just as great security as a regiment of soldiers. Let that barrier fall, which since the end of the war has stood between Germany and her Western neighbours, and the way will be free to make co-operation between Germany and the countries that were formerly her enemies in war, as close and fruitful as is demanded by the common interests of all nations, and therewith the most deeply founded interest of the League of Nations itself. . . .

The German Government has always adopted the standpoint that the starting-point of all efforts for securing peace must be the extension of the methods for the peaceful solution of every kind of conflict between States. War will not be avoided by preparing a war against war, but only by removing its causes. The more we succeed in finding a practical way of settling existing and future differences between our States, the more we can realise the ideas that lie behind the model treaty for the avoidance of war, drawn up at a German suggestion, and already mentioned by some of my predecessors, the less need will there be for measures to be taken in the case of a complete violation of peace. . . .

In my view there is another great chapter that should precede the chapter on ultimate measures of Sanctions. That is the problem of general disarmament.

This last passage is quoted more fully in Chapter X.

But Stresemann was dead in less than four weeks after this speech (October 3, 1929). He was not to live even to see his country free from the invader, which occurred so far as the Rhineland was concerned more than twelve months later and the evacuation of the Saar six years later, with the question of mutual disarmament as far off settlement as it ever had been. The policy of fulfilment staggered on nevertheless through all these years—hopelessly.

CHAPTER VIII

The Covenant at Work

And now an historic review becomes necessary, however summary, of the earlier disputes brought to the League for settlement. For this was the appointed way to the League of Nations Peace Era promised us by the architects so busily constructing at the "Peace Conference" and our task is to arrive at an understanding of just how and where the League failed to fulfil expectations—and why.

First it has to be remembered that 1920–24 was a period of transition. "The Supreme Council," composed of an exalted representative of each of the Allies—Britain, France, Italy and Japan—responsible with America for the Peace Treaties—continued to meet at Conferences, notably in London, Paris, Cannes and Genoa, but delegated some of its functions to "the Ambassadors' Conference." The latter title will be met with in this chapter till, after the Corfu incident in 1923, where it was not considered to have distinguished itself, the Ambassadors' Conference followed the Supreme Council into oblivion, and Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries (the exalted personnel of the Supreme Council) began to attend the Council of the League instead. The Struma Valley incident of 1925 marked the emergence of the Council of the League with the Assembly behind it to supreme authority in these international crises. But ten years after this that authority too was fast disappearing, supplanted once more by the old diplomacy and its Balance of Power.

Let us then examine the successive disputes between nations after the coming into being of the League and its Covenant before the Manchurian disaster and see how far Assembly and Council contrived to preserve "Collective Security" by means of the Articles of the Covenant set out in Chapter IV.

The Aaland Islands.—The Covenant came into effect on January 10, 1920, and on June 19, at a meeting of the League Council Britain drew attention under Article XI to the dispute about the Aaland Islands at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia in the Baltic between Sweden and Finland. Under the Tsars the islands were united with Finland and

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Finland on attaining its freedom offered the islands autonomy under Finnish sovereignty, but an unofficial plebiscite showed that a majority of the inhabitants favoured union with Sweden.

Two successive League Commissions reported (1) that the issue was international and not the business of Finland only and (2) that the islands could not secede to Sweden but should accept autonomy under five specific guarantees. The two countries agreed, the Finnish Parliament enacted the guarantees and the neutrality and demilitarisation of the islands were guaranteed by all the Baltic Powers. Neither the Supreme Council nor the Ambassadors' Conference had any hand in this first success of the League—apparently because Britain did not will it.

Vilna.—That was a splendid send off, but the next dispute was a very different story, still in the first year of the League. A provisional line had left Vilna in Lithuanian territory (it was the capital of the old Lithuanian duchy), but Poland claimed it. The Council sent a military Commission in September to prevent hostilities, but a Polish general occupied the city and district—and stayed there though his Government repudiated his action. The Council attempted a plebiscite but failed and a Commission under M. Hyman, the Belgian member of the Council, proposed autonomy under Lithuania. The League's first Assembly called upon both parties to accept it under Article XV. They refused and the League did not insist (ignoring, that is, Article XVI), and the Council of Ambassadors took their opportunity and decreed that Vilna should be in Poland.

The dispute is important in history because already in the first year of the Covenant disputants rejected a settlement which the Assembly called upon them to accept, no "sanctions" following the rejection. History will surmise that the Government behind the Council of Ambassadors favoured the more powerful friend of the Allies and so contrived that the League Council should acquiesce in the ball going to the other Council more responsive to their point of view.

Chanaq.—The next dispute in chronological order was far more disturbing at the time though it did not come before the League at all. Turkey had revolted against its Sultan and established a National Government at Angora under Mustafa Kemal Pasha with a Parliament which in January 1920 adopted a National Pact claiming among

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other things the restoration of Eastern Thrace to Turkey. But the Allies signed the Treaty of Sèvres on August 10th with the Constantinople Government of the Sultan, ignoring both the Angora Government and its claims. Kemal proceeded to repel the Greek invasion of Asia Minor supported by the Allies and to march on the Dardanelles. There neutral zones had been proclaimed and occupied by the Allies and in September 1922 British forces (the French and Italians had withdrawn) faced the advancing Turkish Army at Chanaq. Mr. Lloyd George, the British Premier, issued a manifesto to the Empire and the world, calling for resistance to the Turks and the maintenance of the freedom of the Straits. Happily General Harington in a talk with the Turkish commander ascertained that there was no intention or wish to attack the freedom of the Straits. An armistice was followed by a conference and the Treaty of Lausanne was signed on July 24, 1923—this time with the Angora Government (conceding East Thrace).

But for twenty-four hours the world believed it was on the verge of another world war without any reference to the League of Nations at all. It was said that there was not time to appeal to the League, but the Angora claims were set forth nearly three years before the victorious Angora army reached Chanaq, and be it noted that only the victorious army induced the Allies to take any notice of them at all. On November 4th the Sultan was deposed and on October 19th Mr. Lloyd George also.

Upper Silesia.—The Vilna dispute was taken over from the League by the Allied Ambassadors; on the other hand the dispute between Germany and Poland concerning their frontier in Upper Silesia was relegated to the League by the Allied Ambassadors to propose the proper application of the Treaty of Versailles to the matter. That was because the Allies were at variance with each other. The Treaty spoke of "the wishes of the inhabitants" but also of "geographical and economical conditions." France wanted to regard principally the wishes of the inhabitants: Britain wanted largely to override these on account of geographical and economic conditions. A neutral Commission (Belgian, Brazilian, Chinese and Spanish) adopted the plebiscite line and relegated an economic straightening out to an economic agreement between the two countries, and this was done. But Germany, agreeing with Britain on the "geographical and economic" issue,

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registered a grudge against the League. Of course the idea of using Article XIX upon the provisions of the Treaty was not thought of. As has been said, the Treaty of Versailles was sacrosanct, especially while the Allied Ambassadors were looking on!

Another matter referred to the League by the Allied Ambassadors was the drawing up of a scheme of autonomy for the German inhabitants of *Memel* under the sovereignty of Lithuania. This was successfully accomplished.

Corfu.—The Corfu crisis came twelve months after the Chanag one. An Italian general was assassinated on August 27, 1923, while delimitating, for the Conference of Allied Ambassadors, the frontier between Greece and Albania. Mussolini demanded redress from Greece which refused some of his demands. Italy then bombarded and occupied the island of Corfu and Greece appealed to the League.

Mussolini then informed his Council of Ministers that it was "absolutely inadmissible" for the Council of the League to assume the task of deciding the question. If the Council were to declare itself competent "Italy would be faced with the problem of remaining a member of the League or of leaving it. I have decided," he said, "for the second alternative." And at the League Council meeting Signor Salandra informed it "that the Italian dispute with Greece was a question of national honour and that no one but the Italian Government had a right to interfere even as mediators."

An adjournment of the Council was then proposed, but before it was carried Lord Robert Cecil secured that Articles X, XII and XV "of the Treaty of Versailles" should first be read aloud. "The audience then listened to the interpreter's reading of these pledges, by which members of the League undertook to preserve against external aggression each other's territorial integrity, and submit to arbitration, or inquiry by the Council, any dispute likely to lead to a rupture."

According to *The Times* correspondent at Geneva, there were those who held the view that it would be discreet to draw a temporary veil over the question of whether the occupation of Corfu was or was not a breach of the Covenant, and that the League should concentrate on efforts to prevent war.

But at this point the Inter-Allied Commission of Ambassadors came in to assert their interest in the dispute. The League Council politely admitted it and suggested the terms of an award. These the Ambassadors

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accepted, including the suggestion that The Hague Court should assess the damages, and the disputants agreed to them. The Italian Ambassador was one of the Commission and, anyway, the Commission was not the League of Nations. Nevertheless the Commission did *not* remit the decision as to the amount of the damages to The Hague but awarded the whole amount demanded on the Italian threat to remain at Corfu if it was not forthcoming.

This was Mussolini's preliminary "try-out" of the Covenant machinery, very useful for guiding the Ethiopian defiance. The League had hardly vindicated its authority, but the Italians both vacated Corfu and remained members of the League!

The Struma Valley.—We come now to the most perfect example of how the Covenant through "Collective Security" ought to preserve world peace, the Ambassadors' Conference having disappeared. Two signatories of the Covenant flew at each other's throats, the Council separated them—not by force but by the exercise of authority—they separated, and accepted an enjoined treaty of peace.

On October 22, 1925, there was a frontier "incident" between Greece and Bulgaria in the Struma valley. Pickets trespassed a few hundred yards and fired upon each other; troops followed. Greece sent an ultimatum to Bulgaria, whereupon Bulgaria appealed to the League. M. Briand, President of the Council just then, telegraphed to both sides asking them to stay their marching and shooting and summoned a special meeting of the Council for the 26th. The Council commanded an immediate suspension of hostilities and sent a Commission of army officers to the spot and all troops were withdrawn within sixty hours. Then a second Commission was sent to investigate and report. The report was ready for the next meeting of the Council by the first week of December, assessing damages and proposing the permanent residence of two neutral Commissioners on the frontier to prevent further incidents. The Council and the combatants promptly accepted the report.

It can hardly be doubted that in pre-League days a war would have resulted with or without the embroilment of the Great Powers outside the Balkans, but it must be remembered that neither Germany nor Russia was then a member of the League, though the Locarno Agreement with Germany had just been concluded (it was signed in December).

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Bolivia and Paraguay.—On hostilities breaking out between the two countries in December 1928, the League intervened promptly but the combatants referred their differences to the Pan-American Conference. The Conference worked slowly and the League had to intervene again in June 1932, but the combatants played off the two authorities against each other. Other countries ceased to export arms to the combatants, but when Paraguay rejected a proposal of a special meeting of the Assembly for a settlement, through a Conference of American States, arms were granted to Bolivia and Paraguay resigned from the League. But in June 1935 an armistice was signed and a peace was negotiated at Buenos Aires very much on the lines suggested by the League, though it was only in August 1936 that the League was informed that the differences could be regarded as at an end.

Then follow, in rapid succession, the breakdowns regarding Manchuria, Ethiopia and Spain, which put an end for the time being to the theory and practice of Collective Security. But one more minor dispute should be referred to here: *Hungary and Yugoslavia*. Two disputes in 1934 between these countries were amicably settled, one about frontier incidents and the other arising from the assassination of the King of Yugoslavia, the perpetrator of which Hungary was accused of sheltering in a terrorist camp. The settlement led to a Conference at Geneva in 1937 attended by thirty-five States, which included two Conventions for the prevention and punishment of terrorists and for the establishment of an International Criminal Court.

CHAPTER IX

Manchuria

It will be remembered that we are investigating, not the merits of disputes between nations, but how far the League contrived to establish and preserve Collective Security by means of the several Articles of the Covenant. Notoriously the League failed in regard to the dispute between China and Japan concerning Manchuria. How far did the League go in bringing into effect the provisions of the Covenant before arriving at acknowledged failure?

In the midst of the economic crisis, when in September 1931 Britain was forced off the gold standard and foreign Governments "were hard hit by the sudden drop of the gold value of the pound sterling"—their sheet-anchor—a body of Japanese conspirators struck the first blow at the League system.

They invaded Manchuria on the night of September 18th against the orders of their Government. They tried to assassinate their own Foreign Secretary. The League's Assembly was in session at the time. By acting vigorously with the Japanese Government, the League could probably have nipped this conspiracy in the bud. But the statesmen at Geneva and their Governments at home had their private troubles to think of when the Assembly met on that Monday morning (September 21st).¹

China appealed to the League Council under Article XI against the action of Japanese forces (professedly in Manchuria to guard the railways in which Japan was interested) in attacking and taking several Chinese towns. By the end of the month the Council had obtained a pledge of withdrawal from both sides. Despite this undertaking, however, Japan (where the military authority had meanwhile definitely superseded the civil) proceeded to extend her occupation and bombard undefended towns from the air, and within a year set up the puppet state of "Manchukuo" as independent of China and as by its own wish docile to Japanese oversight.

The Chinese replied by an unofficial boycott of Japanese goods, with the approval of the Chinese Central Government, whereupon the

¹ Maxwell Garnett in *A Lasting Peace*, p. 106.

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attack of Shanghai by the Japanese fleet followed. Japan thus set up in Manchuria and around Shanghai the fullest precedents for Hitler (among other would-be "aggressors"), and unfortunately the League of Nations under the lead of Sir John Simon set up precedents very acceptable to Hitler as to how an aggressor might fare with the Covenant and its Collective Security. For four months (January to May 1932) an appalling slaughter was maintained by sea, land and air till Japan acceded to the "mediation" of the Powers and the League, signing an armistice and transporting her troops for the further conquest of Manchuria.

"The action of the League in this Manchurian dispute," says the League of Nations Union's narrative,² was determined by the attitude of the Member States. The European Great Powers were anxious to proceed by conciliation only. The lesser States regarded the case as one of violation of the Covenant, and wanted the application of the whole Covenant to its solution. But Japan was allowed to see that the Great Powers, who had in their time themselves bagged slices of territory from China, intended to rely upon persuasion only and not on force, economic or military. Japan was a Great Power: China, through its weakness, ranked as a lesser State. The Japanese Military Oligarchy, which had silently replaced civil and more or less democratic control, noted the alignment of League opinion and acted accordingly.

The Council, which the Great Powers dominated, continued to remonstrate from time to time with no visible effect, but it did in December 1932 set up the Lytton Commission of Inquiry to go to Manchuria, establish the facts and suggest a solution, and next month China, calling for a Special Assembly, appealed to Articles X and XV, "thus invoking the responsibility of the League States to preserve the integrity of their fellow-Members against aggression and to report on a dispute, if need be, without the consent of the disputants." This was a turning of the tables on the Great Powers. In January also the United States declared that they would not recognise any situation created in violation of the Kellogg Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. But "in spite of the active co-operation of the U.S.A. in the early stages of the crisis, [this] co-operation was rendered abortive partly by the failure of Sir John Simon and Mr. Stimson"—

² *What the League Has Done, 1920-1938*, p. 15.

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British Foreign Secretary and American Secretary of State—"to work together."³

A very grave debate took place in the Assembly (March 4, 1932) on the principles which the League should adopt in settling this dispute:⁴

The main division of opinion lay between the four Council Great Powers, backed, to some extent, by four lesser States, who advocated mediation only as the method of settlement, and twenty-six others who were prepared for the Assembly to act as Judge and use all the League resources. On this point two great groups split; Canada, Ireland and South Africa falling into the "total Covenant" group against Britain and India; Rumania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia going far beyond France and Poland. Of thirty-five States who spoke, twenty-seven declared that the League and the future peace of the world depended on a just settlement of this dispute, twenty-two that the Covenant had been broken. Many said the League must uphold its principles honestly; and that the situation in China was war. It was pointed out that no right of legitimate defence could be stretched to cover the Japanese aggressions, that no treaty grievances can justify breaking the Covenant and armed intervention, and that aggression can take place without a formal declaration of war.

The Assembly resolved on March 11th to apply Article XV, paragraph 3, and if need be paragraph 4 also, appointed a Committee of nineteen to investigate and report and then suspended its sittings pending the Committee's report. The same day America expressed its approval.

The Assembly met again in December 1932 and had the Lytton Report before it. Its main points were that the Japanese policy was incompatible with the Covenant, that the "Manchukuo" idea was intolerable to the people of Manchuria and a Japanese creation, and

³ *Security*, by Sir Arthur Salter (Macmillan), p. 146. See also, *The World's Design*, by Salvador de Madariaga (George Allen & Unwin), p. 157: "Secretary Stimson now said that he would go as far as the League, now that he did not contemplate sanctions, now that he hoped for the best, and now that he would wait and see. All this was very illuminating, particularly when rendered in the style of Mr. Norman Davis, but it left Sir John Simon wondering; and when Sir John Simon wonders, the world may expect great words, but not prompt deeds." A curious parallel position arose nine years later when the Churchill Government was driven to try "appeasement" with the Japan of that day over the closing of "the Burma Road" for supplies to China. America seemed all for resisting, but Lord Halifax and Mr. Cordell Hull seemed to find it as difficult to hammer out agreed policy as the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State of 1931-32.

⁴ Full typescript summary by the League of Nations Union on the history of this dispute, p. 16.

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that a solution compatible with the Covenant was possible, if China, while retaining its sovereignty in Manchuria, consented for a transition period to an autonomous government there, advised by neutral advisers borrowed from the League, who should organise law and order, reform the finances, and guarantee to Japan the fulfilment of her treaty rights.

The Assembly opened with speeches by China and Japan.

China appealed to the Assembly to settle the dispute on the basis of the Lytton Report, and to refuse recognition of "Manchukuo." China would accept conciliation. Mr. Matsuoka justified Japanese policy and suggested that the sound forces in Manchuria should be left to develop. If the League decreed a settlement it must be responsible for carrying it out. He was followed by twenty-five States, of whom the first ten spoke strongly in defence of the Covenant. They suggested the setting up of a conciliation committee to conciliate on the basis of the Lytton Report. The most significant statement was that of M. Paul-Boncour of France, who declared categorically in favour of the Lytton Report conclusions.

Sir John Simon then spoke for Great Britain. He criticised China by means of quotations from the Lytton Report taken out of their context. The only one of its conclusions which he quoted with approval was "a mere restoration of the *status quo ante* would be no solution." He advocated conciliation with Russia and the United States. This speech was interpreted, especially by the Japanese, as an indication that Great Britain supported the cause of Japan, an impression strengthened by Canada, who spoke on both sides, but at much greater length in criticism of China than in defence of the Covenant, and by Australia which made a colourless speech. Except for Germany which was also non-committal, all the other speeches vindicated the principles of the Covenant.

The Assembly was ultimately content to "set up a committee of conciliation to work on the basis of the Covenant, Kellogg Pact and Nine-Power Treaty, and the Lytton Report principles and thanking the Lytton Commission for its Report." Japan promptly rejected the conciliation resolution and therefore, as it was obviously impossible to conciliate on any basis giving hope of success—though the Secretary-General and M. Hyman, the President, attempted to find a formula which should be at once consistent with the Covenant and acceptable to Japan—the Committee of nineteen issued a report under Article XV, paragraph 4 of the Covenant.

That was on January 21, 1933. Meanwhile Japan invaded another

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province, Jehol, and on February 23rd sent an ultimatum to China threatening the invasion of North China south of the Great Wall. On February 24th the Assembly adopted the report of the Committee of Nineteen which incorporated the recommendations of the Lytton Report, Japan alone dissenting, and on March 27th Japan withdrew from the League.

It will be noted that the Assembly had now carried out its duties under paragraph 3 and 4 of Article XV of the Covenant; that is to say, it had "endeavoured to effect a settlement of the dispute" referred to it by China and had "made public a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which were deemed just and proper in regard thereto." The Assembly also acted in accordance with paragraph 6 in that its members did not "go to war with" China, who was willing to "comply with the recommendations of the report."

So much for Article XV. But over the page was Article XVI, paragraph 1 of which said that

should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its Covenant under Article XV, it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which *hereby* undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.

And paragraph 2 declares that

it shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the Covenants of the League.

There used to be talks of "gaps" in the provisions of the Covenant: there is no gap between Article XV, paragraph 4, and Article XVI, paragraphs 1 and 2. What, then, did the Council or the Assembly do with regard to Article XVI? Nothing. Japanese opinion was evidently expecting something, for the conclusion of the report of the Committee of Nineteen on February 14th was followed by a slump on the Tokio and Osaka stock exchanges, which had to be closed for two days. "The precarious financial state of Japan was reflected in its Budget,

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which reached a record figure of £223,700,000 at par, of which 36 per cent was army and navy estimates. Japanese bonds fell ten points in a fortnight in Wall Street, New York."

The Assembly did appoint sub-committees to deal with the question of export of arms and the non-recognition of "Manchukuo." But these had no result. Britain imposed a partial embargo on the export of arms to *both* combatants but withdrew it after a fortnight. Article XVI, with its "sanctions," became a dead letter so far as the Far East was concerned. At the perfunctory obsequies at the next Assembly (September 1933) China, not inappropriately, delivered the funeral oration. Little heed was given to it at the time, but it is impressive reading to-day in the light of subsequent history.

In the general discussion at the Council, the President and several States, but *no Great Power*, alluded to the League inaction in the Far East as the main cause of its diminished hold on public confidence [there were other reasons, as we shall see later]. Mr. Wellington Koo, speaking for China, made a detailed statement. He welcomed the technical collaboration of the League with China. The main purpose, however, of the League was to maintain peace and the disillusion of the world in this regard was shared by China, victim of armed aggression by another League Member, with keenest feeling. He recounted the manner in which Japan had greeted the report of the Assembly by further attacks. The Japanese still occupied the Four Eastern Provinces. The Chinese Government viewed this situation as a standing violation of the collective treaties of the world. It was determined not to acquiesce in the illegal accomplished fact. "That accomplished fact will remain only as long as it is impossible for my country, or politically impossible for the rest of the League, to vindicate the sanctity of Treaties."

China, in maintaining this attitude, was doing her best to preserve her own territorial integrity and political independence against Japanese aggression, and also resisting the attempt to convert the Covenant into a scrap of paper. That attempt was now taking the form of the strongest pressure to induce China to abandon the policy of co-operation with the West through the League and to adopt the principle of "Asia for the Asiatics." China had accepted the League's decision not to recognise the illegal régime in Manchuria.

China regretted that the February Report of the League had not been fulfilled, the more because the results of the delay were undermining the Covenant everywhere and imperilling world peace. As long as this glaring case of Covenant-breaking was not settled in accordance with international law it would remain a stumbling-block to disarmament and peace. The absence of any effective action from the League had encouraged those who all along had been proclaiming the belief that might is right. It had placed a premium on aggression.

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A race of armaments had begun. The strongest naval power in Asia had given notice of its intention to make its navy still stronger on the expiration of existing treaty limitations. The whole situation of the world revolved round the question of whether the League were defended or allowed to disintegrate for lack of support. The collective peace system of the Covenant and the Pact of Paris rested upon the principle that world peace was a common concern to all nations, and that each must bear the contingent share of risk and sacrifice in the common cause.

CHAPTER X

The Disarmament Fiasco: Germany's Breakaway

The German Policy of Fulfilment described in Chapters VI and VII had, of course, to contend from the first with national resentment both by the reactionaries on the one side and by the extremists on the other. The reactionary "Kap Putsch" was destroyed by an industrial strike, which in its turn developed into a movement for "soviets" in various parts of the Reich. A Communist Government maintained itself for several weeks in the Saxon Vogtland and in the Ruhr a Red Army, 50,000 strong, gave battle to the Government forces. Later discontent was expressed soberly by votes, but a centre, larger or smaller according to how the Government fared with the Allies, steadily supported its policy.¹ With the easing of reparations, the evacuation of the Rhineland, the Locarno Pact and the admission to the League, the Government seemed for a time more firmly established.

But as these injustices were diminished, remaining injustices rankled the more.² Moreover, the diminution of injustices already conceded

¹ Its steadiness was materially helped by the system of proportional representation of the Weimar Constitution, but the particular system was defective, as British students of "P.R." see it (Proportional Representation Society, 82, Victoria Street, S.W.1), or it would have lasted longer than it did.

² Mr. Philips Price, in *Hitler's War and Eastern Europe* (George Allen & Unwin), says that "the Versailles Treaty was not the cause of the rise to power of the Nazi regime. Its obnoxious clauses were abrogated by peaceful persuasion before they came to power. On the other hand, a German national uprising was sooner or later certain to come whether the Versailles Treaty had existed or not, as a reaction after defeat in the war. . . . That is not to say that the Allies were wise in forcing the Versailles Treaty on Germany in that form. They owe it to their consciences and to the future of Europe that they failed to think out in 1919 a Europe that could solve its more pressing problems. Particularly blameworthy in this respect were the measures taken by France, nominally to enforce the Versailles Treaty by the military occupation of the Ruhr, which caused chaos to Europe and precipitated an economic crisis in Germany. . . .

"Hitler was able to come to power, not because of the indignities of the Versailles Treaty but because of the breakdown of the Parliamentary system. No stable Government could be formed because the Party Committees could not agree on essential issues. There was complete divorce between legislature and executive. The Reichstag was elected, but

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had been conceded so unwillingly and with so severe a "time lag" that almost all healing attributes were taken from them. "Goodwill" had no chance before such a procedure. The allotment of practically all the important industrial districts of Upper Silesia to Poland (October 1921), as largely developed by German industry and enterprise, was a severe shock for which France was blamed. In this atmosphere the other divorced German minorities became rallying-points for passionate irredentist movements, though even such large exclusions as Austria and Bohemian Sudetenland aroused little indignation at the time of the Peace Treaties.

Again, we talked much of a reorganised European policy regarding African territories to give equal opportunities to all by an extension of the mandate system: grievance fed on our absolute inaction. The record of Germany's sole guilt for the war, also without modification,³ and the equally absurd legend of her complete innocence, fed the people's exasperation, knowing that if guilt there was it was that of their former rulers and not their own. Against such a rising tide of exasperation the Policy of Fulfilment fought a losing battle and the Policy of Defiance seemed more and more attractive.

But what rankled most of all and what gave Hitler his greatest chance was the Allies' disregard of their pledge that German disarmament under the Peace Treaty should be the first step towards the similar disarmament of the Allies themselves. Let us examine the default of Allied statesmen, led by France but with the acquiescence (to put it no higher) of Britain, more closely, for it amounted to a major breakdown of the whole Covenant system.

That to disarm was part of the Covenant was obvious, though that did not prevent people from half-heartedly disputing it from time to time. In the Preamble to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles were the words:

the parties refused to record the electoral decisions as a mandate to form a Government. They continued to expect, as in Hohenzollern days, a Government to be presented to them, and then that they should start to bargain with it." (Pp. 67, 73, 74.)

³ Stresemann quoted to the German People's Party (of which he was the leader), in repudiating Poincaré's reference to war guilt of May 1926, President Hoover's dictum that "No one who examines the facts can have the least doubt that it was the economic condition of Europe that plunged the overburdened European nations head-foremost into the War" (*Gustav Stresemann*, p. 38). But Stresemann also told the German colony at Geneva that he felt, historically speaking, "that we do not do well to go on asking how we came to lose the War. Perhaps it would be better if we asked ourselves how it was that the whole world stood in arms against us" (the same, p. 30).

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In order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval and air clauses which follow,

and on receiving the Draft Treaty in May 1919 the German delegates said:

Germany is prepared to agree to the basic idea of the army, navy and air regulation, provided that this is a beginning of a general reduction of armaments.

To which the Allies replied:

The Allied and Associated Powers wish to make it clear that their requirements in regard to German armaments were not made solely with the object of rendering it impossible to resume her policy of military aggression. They are also the first step towards the reduction and limitation of armaments which they seek to bring about as one of the most fruitful preventives of war and which it will be one of the first duties of the League of Nations to promote.

It is in the light of these passages that Article VIII of the Covenant (which was part of the Treaty) must be read:

The Members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement of common action of international obligations.

The Council, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each State, shall formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments.

Such plans shall be subject to reconsideration and revision at least every ten years.

After these plans have been adopted by the several Governments, the limits of armaments therein fixed shall not be exceeded without the concurrence of the Council.

The assurances at Versailles were repeated six years later at Locarno, when all the signatories, including Germany, renewed their promise of co-operation in carrying out that part of the Covenant whose binding force was again acknowledged. Seven years later still the Agreement of December 11, 1932, declared in its first paragraph that

The Governments of Great Britain, France and Italy have declared that one of the principles that should guide the Conference on disarmament should be the grant to Germany, and the other Powers disarmed by treaty, of equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations, and that this principle should find itself

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embodied in the convention containing the conclusions of the Disarmament Conference.

That was in December 1932. In October 1933 Germany left the Disarmament Conference and left the League, preliminary to denouncing the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty. What had happened after all these assurances to prompt Germany to this break-away? It will be said that that is obvious: Hitler had become German Chancellor. But it is not so simple as all that. Promises were still being made up to the last moment; we must review how these promises were faring during the thirteen years, 1920 to 1933.

The League at its very first Assembly in September 1920 appointed an expert Temporary Mixed Commission to explore the whole question of disarmament. Then, after the rejection of the Protocol of Geneva, the League set up a new Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference to prepare the framework for a Draft Treaty on the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments, to be laid before a World Conference for the insertion of details and figures.

By December 1930 the Commission had held six full sessions and produced a Draft Convention dealing with the two questions, what armaments there are to reduce and how any kind of limitation should proceed. Briefly the Convention agreed upon a definite plan providing that in each country a limit should be fixed for all soldiers, conscript or professional, all officers, all money and material of armies, all aeroplanes, airships and personnel of air forces, all warships and money spent on navies and upon the total public funds provided for armaments in the Budget.⁴

It will be seen that the first ten of the thirteen years had now elapsed. (Meanwhile, as late as 1927, the punitive disarmament clauses of the Treaty were arousing discussions between Germany and the Allies, after which supervision was transferred from the Allies to the League.) And Stresemann, as we have seen, then looked for the immediate fulfilment of Treaty promises, saying in his last speech to the League Assembly, four years after Locarno:

In my view there is another great chapter that should precede the chapter on ultimate measures of Sanctions. That is the problem of general disarmament. All the previous speakers, I am glad to see, underlined the extreme significance of this problem, and the importance attaching to it at the present stage of the League development. . . .

⁴ *What the League Has Done*, p. 49.

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After the serious disappointments caused by the years'-long stagnation of the negotiations on this subject, I seem to see at last the prospect of appreciable progress. It is with the greatest interest and warm sympathy that we have followed the progress of the negotiations now pending between the great sea Powers. . . .

I hope that we may be quickly carried across the abyss of the Geneva disarmament negotiations by the impulse which has inspired the sea Powers in theirs.⁵

And then two years after his death, at the 1931 Assembly, the then German Foreign Minister, Dr. Curtius, in discussing the Conference which was at last imminent, made the following grave protest and warning:

A mere limitation of armaments at the present level would merely perpetuate existing inequalities and would imply a failure on the part of the Conference. Germany has, under the Peace Treaties, reduced her armaments to a minimum. She has no heavy artillery, military aircraft, tanks or submarines. As a counterpart to the obligations imposed on Germany, there exists a formal undertaking of the other States to disarm, the disarmament of Germany being regarded as merely a prelude to general disarmament. Twelve years have elapsed since the Covenant was signed. A strong and effective reduction of the armaments of the Powers with considerable armaments was, in the view of Germany, an indispensable condition of the success of the Disarmament Conference. The Disarmament Conference must put an end to the existence of rules of international law which discriminate between victors and vanquished in the Great War. Otherwise the German nation would be unable to adhere to the Convention.

But France was still the formidable stumbling-block. Said M. Maginot, the French Minister of War, the same autumn:

All nations cannot be placed on the same footing. It is just and necessary that the aggressor should undergo a more severe limitation than the nations who have not committed, and refuse to commit, aggression. There can be no question of going back on the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. With this reservation [*sic*] France will do all she can to make the Disarmament Conference a success.

Because of this reservation she made the Disarmament Conference, on the contrary, a failure! This German protest was only one of a long series of such protests from successive German Chancellors and Foreign Secretaries.

The first session of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation

⁵ *Gustave Stresemann*, p. 414.

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of Armaments sat from February 2, 1932, to July 23rd, and at the end of it "equality" was no nearer achievement. And meanwhile

The moderate Government of Dr. Brüning fell, before Brüning had been given a single concession to take home. He had offered to accept voluntarily all the limitations of Versailles and more, and to scrap Germany's famous pocket battleships, provided only that the others should disarm on the same principles themselves; there could be no more of the Versailles discrimination between sheep and goats: but the burning question of equality of rights—not, be it noted, equality of numbers but equality of treatment—had never been frankly faced and discussed.⁶

Von Papen became Chancellor and was ignored and at the end of the 1932 session Germany broke away, her delegates having previously explained that unless the principle of equality was recognised Germany could not undertake to continue her collaboration.

In the autumn, however, von Neurath, now Foreign Minister (he afterwards became a Hitler man), secured the declaration of December 11, 1932, printed above, and under General von Schleicher, who succeeded von Papen as Chancellor, Germany rejoined the Conference, "in order to achieve within the shortest time conclusion of a disarmament convention that would create equal security for everybody through the disarmament of the highly armed States." Still preserving the policy of Brüning, he declared that

It is our fundamental right to demand that any decision of the Conference should apply to us without limitation; there can be no question of distinguishing between the rights of those who have won and those who have lost the Great War.

Then, on January 28, 1933, von Schleicher fell and Adolf Hitler became Chancellor. And even Hitler preserved his predecessor's basis of negotiation, and in reply to President Roosevelt he offered to forgo any claim to re-arm now in any such weapons as military aircraft "if during five years other nations destroy theirs." Mr. Norman Davis (the American "Ambassador at Large") declared that

While the United States is not bound by the provisions or the implications of the Treaties, I have no hesitation in saying that it is the will of the American people, interpreted by President Roosevelt, to join with the other Powers in disarming down to the German level.

⁶ In Mr. W. Arnold-Forster's chapter on "Arbitration, Security, Disarmament" in the composite volume *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War*, Gollancz, p. 414.

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Mr. Davis said the American objective was to get, "as soon as possible, through successive stages, down to the basis of a domestic police force." The phrase "a domestic police force" is interesting because, as Mr. Arnold-Foster has pointed out,⁷ "whereas the Covenant speaks of 'national safety' as the criterion, the terms of Armistice spoke of 'domestic safety,' and that was the principle on which Germany was disarmed."

Surely now the Allies would face the inevitable and fulfill the Versailles promise. Mr. Arnold-Forster, in his careful analysis of the endeavours of the Conference up to September 1933, said these four things:⁸

If they [the pledges to Germany] are not honoured very soon there will unquestionably be a disastrous break-away by Germany, who will claim and exercise freedom to re-arm.

No effort should be spared to conclude a first world disarmament treaty before Christmas, 1934. This is now nearly within grasp.

Unless agreement is reached now on abolition of war planes within five years or ten, German re-armament in this respect is certain. [He should have named a shorter period here!]

And in his final sentence:

To press on, undeterred, with disarmament, in face of the German situation, is dangerous and difficult: but to call off disarmament, and to try falling back on the one-sided regime of Versailles—that would be not only dangerous but assuredly disastrous.

But the end was come. When in October 1933 Sir John Simon produced a plan under which, while a preliminary period of eight years was allowed for reducing armaments elsewhere, Germany should remain disarmed, Hitler promptly took Germany out of the Conference and out of the League.

⁷ *The Intelligent Man*, p. 412 (footnote).

⁸ The same, pp. 403, 453, 454, and 455.

CHAPTER XI

Hitler's Policy of Defiance

When President Hindenburg called Hitler to office the Nazis were actually losing ground in the country. At the General Election of July 1932, 230 Nazis were elected out of a House of 576: at that of the following November only 195. After the July election Hindenburg offered Hitler the Vice-Chancellorship under Von Papen. Hitler refused, demanding the Chancellorship, and a fortnight later (August 28th) Papen said:¹

The unbridled utterances of the Nazi leader bodes ill for his claims for the State leadership. He [Chancellor Papen] did not concede to Herr Hitler the right to regard the minority which followed his flag as the nation. He was firmly resolved to stamp out the smouldering fires of civil war.

Papen belonged to the old ascendant Junker class, of which Bismarck was the greatest embodiment, and represented the great landowners and the military and now the great industrialists as well, all of whom (apart from their large fortunes from currency depreciation² while others were starving) were in the background during the ascendancy of Social Democracy. But after the November elections, when General Schleicher became Chancellor, the Junkers were threatened with exposure of a misuse of agricultural State subsidies on a large scale.

This had to be prevented, even at the cost of a revolution. And so the Junkers decided to combine with Hitler in order to overthrow Schleicher who had dared to threaten them. There was to be a coalition Nazi-Junker Government. The Nazis were to be freed from their financial embarrassment caused by their defeat at the last election, and the Junkers from their political embarrassment. Both would triumph over the hated liberal State.

As to the future, the Junker leader Papen, and the Nazi leader Hitler, promised each other loyal collaboration. Papen was convinced that he

¹ *The Times* next day.

² Dr. H. F. Koepler (in *A Lasting Peace*) says: "It was inevitable that as a result of the [war] defeat there should be an inflation in Germany. But that it was allowed to develop for four years until it ruined the whole middle class was solely due to the interest which the industrial, agricultural and financial Junkers took in its prolongment."—P. 270.

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could cope with the Nazis and that he could get rid of them when they had done the task he had allotted to them. Hitler thought the same about the Junkers. To-day we know who was right. As Papen had the confidence of the aged President Hindenburg, he succeeded in persuading him to let Hitler form the Government. So that Herr Hitler became Chancellor on January 30, 1922,³

with Papen as Vice-Chancellor.

When Hitler left the Disarmament Conference Sir John Simon did his best to be conciliatory, but it was too late to talk of an eight years' further delay added to the thirteen years already elapsed before "equality" was attained and Hitler saw his opportunity. On October 14 (1933) he issued a manifesto:

The German people and their Government were deeply humiliated by the deliberate refusal of a real moral and actual equality to Germany after the Government of the Reich had declared itself, as a result of the equality promised on November 11, 1932, again ready to take part in the negotiations of the Disarmament Conference. The official representatives of the other States, in public speeches and direct statements to the Foreign Ministers and our delegates, have announced that the present Germany was no longer to be granted this equality. . . .

While the German Government again announces its firm desire for peace, it declares with the deepest regret that it must leave the Disarmament Conference in view of these humiliating and dishonouring demands. It will also announce its resignation from the League of Nations.

Sir John Simon still endeavoured through diplomatic channels to reconcile the French claim for security and the German claim for equality of status. These were brought to an end by the French Note of April 17, 1934, declaring that the German military estimates made further negotiations impossible, and that the return of Germany to the League was indispensable for working out a satisfactory system of guarantees. Yet a German Memorandum of April 16th declared that though the Government claimed the right to possess a defensive air force of short-range machines,

Germany did not claim equality for the first five years of a ten years' Convention, but asked that full equality should be attained at the end of the ten years. The German Government also agreed to the postponement of the reduction of armaments of other Powers until the end of the fifth year of the Convention.

International supervision was accepted, and Germany's recognition

³ From Dr. H. F. Koepler in *A Lasting Peace*, p. 234.

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of the Treaty of Locarno was restated. [But] Germany declared that she could only return to the League after the solution of the question of disarmament, "and above all, of her equality of rights."⁴

But it was not till eleven months later, on March 14, 1935, that Hitler, in the absence of any response, denounced the disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and declared that Germany would re-arm.

Then, on the death of old Hindenburg, Hitler became President as well as Chancellor with the title "Reichsführer," "Empire Leader," the *fait accompli* being confirmed by plebiscite (in place of a General Election)—thirty-eight million "for" and four million "against"—on August 19, 1934. "Criticism," he announced two days before,

Criticism is useless. The world can do without critics, but not without workers. Germany has no room for grumblers, but everybody is free to suggest improvements if they themselves are ready to put their suggestions into effect. The Nazi authoritative government has been founded on two pillars, politically by the National Socialist movement, militarily by the Army. I shall always strive to make the Nazi Party the only political force and the reichswehr the only armed force of the Reich.

Repudiation of the Disarmament Section of the Treaty of Versailles followed in March 1935, with the formal announcement of the coming of re-armament—this latter rather belated as it was known that Hitler was re-arming from the first. A projected visit to Berlin by Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden was postponed over this announcement, but duly took place—with no tangible result—and then Britain, France and Italy met at Stresa in April to talk the position over—with equally intangible results. The three Powers

took into anxious consideration the recent action of the German Government, which they regretfully recognised had undermined public confidence in the security of a peaceful order; they stated that the quantitative assumptions on which efforts for disarmament had been based had consequently been upset but that they would continue their efforts towards a limitation of armaments. And they confirmed the earlier decisions to consult in the event of a threat to Austrian independence.

The final declaration ran:

The three Powers, the object of whose policy is the collective maintenance of peace within the framework of the League of Nations, find

⁴ See "A Retrospect" in *The Times*, of May 28, 1934.

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themselves in complete agreement in opposing, by all practicable means, any unilateral repudiation of treaties which may endanger the peace of Europe, and will act in close and cordial collaboration for this purpose.

Two months later in the House of Commons Mr. Lloyd George characterised this as

a fatuous piece of bluster. In a very short time you will have a military force in Germany which will be the greatest in the world. Where was the "close and cordial collaboration" agreed upon by the three Powers at Stresa? The whole machinery of the League had been discredited. Japan and Germany had flouted the League. Italy was doing the same [in Ethiopia].

And it was on this occasion that Sir Austen Chamberlain said:

In the last resort we have to take our decision at the Council table at Geneva. We have to take the risk of saying, "We are prepared to fulfil our obligations under the Covenant if others will do the same." We ought to say that openly to the Council even at the risk that others may refuse. If we have to use that language and others are offended by it and we come home empty-handed, that much we owe to the honour of the British name and to the efforts that our successive Governments have made to make the League of Nations a real force in international life in the interests of peace and security for us all.

But Hitler went on unheeding with his Policy of Defiance. On March 7, 1936, he announced to the Locarno Powers that Germany repudiated the Locarno Treaty and that he had that day restored "the full and unrestricted sovereignty of the Reich in the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland." The reason given was the alleged violation of the Locarno Treaty by the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Pact. The memorandum ended with a proposal that a demilitarised zone should be created on both sides of the Franco-German and Belgian-German frontiers; an offer to negotiate new security agreements; and a statement that Germany was willing to re-enter the League.

This, as Mr. Eden told the German Ambassador, amounted to the unilateral repudiation of a treaty freely negotiated and freely signed, and in the House of Commons he said:

The abrogation of the Locarno Treaty and the occupation of the demilitarised zone had profoundly shaken confidence in any engagement into which the German Government might in future enter. But His Majesty's Government would examine Herr Hitler's new proposals clear-sightedly and objectively.

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The League Council held a meeting in London which solemnly resolved that Germany had committed a breach of the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno and notified this finding to the remaining signatories of the Locarno Treaty. The speeches included one by M. Litvinoff which is interesting in view of subsequent happenings in the course of which he disclaimed the idea that Germany was being encircled and expressed his Government's readiness to take part in all measures that might be decided upon.

There were no such measures except that the remaining Locarno Powers, recognising a *fait accompli*, the same day re-established the Locarno Pact as an instrument still binding Britain and Italy to defend the French and Belgian frontiers from German invasion though Germany herself had absolved them from defending the same frontier from a French or Belgian invasion of Germany. They instructed their General Staffs forthwith to enter into contact to discuss arrangements to carry out these obligations. Meanwhile, however:

Germany is invited to submit her case against the Franco-Soviet Pact to The Hague Court and to accept its decision as final. She is also invited, pending further negotiations, not to increase her troops in the Rhineland zone and not to build fortifications or lay out landing-grounds there.

It was also proposed (in substitution of Germany's suggestion of demilitarised zones on both sides of the frontier) that an international force should be stationed temporarily on both sides of the frontier under an international commission. In due course Germany rejected these proposals and suggested others which Britain promised to consider. Ultimately, in July, the British Government proposed a conference at which the first business should be "to negotiate a new agreement to take the place of the Rhine Pact of Locarno and to resolve, through the collaboration of all concerned, the situation created by the German initiative of March 7."

The rest was silence, but in November 1937 Lord Halifax, then Lord President of the Council, casually and privately visited Hitler. Mr. Baldwin explained in the House of Commons that "these conversations were of a private character. . . . I am satisfied, however, that the visit has been valuable for the establishment of mutual understanding." But Hitler "was in no hurry," says Sir Neville Henderson, then British Ambassador in Berlin, and nothing came of it. But

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The general effect was, up to a point, undoubtedly good. Hitler cannot but have been—and in fact, so I heard, was—impressed by the obvious sincerity, high principles, and straightforward honesty of a man like Lord Halifax. The general German public regarded the visit as a proof of British goodwill towards Germany, and were clearly appreciative. Nevertheless the official German tendency was to sit back and wait.⁵

A conclusion that may well conclude this chapter.

⁵ *Failure of a Mission*, by Sir Nevile Henderson (Hodder & Stoughton), pp. 98, 99.

CHAPTER XII

The Disarmament Fiasco : Collapse of the Conference

But we must go back to the Disarmament Conference. Germany's withdrawal proved a mortal blow. The Conference continued its discussion in its General Commission and its Bureau for a time.¹ During the two years of its activity an immense amount of very sincere and very strenuous work was done. An immense amount of information was accumulated and the exact nature of the differences of outlook was explored and formulas sought to bridge them. One cannot visualise a future in which the Powers will not find themselves compelled—at least till World Federation has been achieved—to review this material again and again, trying to hammer out (and carry out) a scheme for world disarmament. In a retrospect now (in the midst of "the next war" of which we talked so much but in which in our hearts we could not believe) these seem to be the outstanding points in addition to (1) the failure to come to terms with Germany:

(2) The proposal of Russia for total disarmament before the Conference proper began, "which was not entertained";

(3) President Hoover's proposals to "cut through the brush and adopt some broad and definite method of reducing the overwhelming burden of armaments which now lies upon the toilers of the world";

(4) The British counter-proposals "taking the steam out of" the Hoover initiative.

(5) The insistence of France that "security must come before disarmament," emphasising the contrast between the two points of view (i) that armaments are a menace in the hands of other nations and should be reduced in the name of security, and (ii) that armaments possessed by one's own nation are essential and should be maintained if not increased—also in the name of security—so that disputes about who should diminish what armament glided into unacknowledged unanimity in the desirability of increasing each one's own supply of one's own favourite arm.

¹ See page 81 below.

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President Hoover sent his scheme to the Conference on June 22, 1932, five months after it had opened, so cutting short the preliminary skirmishes that promised to be unending. He pointed out that the Briand-Kellogg Pact meant that the nations had agreed to use their arms solely for defence. The power of defence should therefore be increased by decreases in the power of attack. The reductions must give real economic relief, and he proposed that the arms of the world should be reduced by practically one-third.

The following table briefly indicates the main lines of the proposals, which were published in full on June 24th:

Abolition of all tanks, chemical warfare and large mobile guns.

One-third reduction of land armies above a "police component."

Abolition of all bombing planes, and total prohibition of bombardment from the air.

One-third reduction of the Treaty numbers and tonnage of battleships (according to the Five Powers Agreements).

One-fourth reduction of the Treaty tonnage of aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers.

One third reduction of submarines, with a minimum tonnage of 35,000 for any nation.²

This aroused great enthusiasm and if Britain had led in accepting it subject to adjustments and "gone all out" in its advocacy, the conviction at the time was that very substantial results might have accrued. But instead Britain produced a rival scheme on July 7th which effectively blanketed the Hoover plan. The outstanding features which public opinion seized on were that

(1) Britain, instead of scrapping a percentage of battleships and cruisers, would reduce the limit of tonnage for each battleship from 35,000 to 22,000 and of each cruiser from 10,000 to 7,000. This she represented as scrapping *all* existing battleships and cruisers instead of only some, like President Hoover, whereas the important feature of the British plan was the great new building programme involved for all the Powers.

(2) She would abolish all submarines, or at least limit them to 250 tons each, though she knew that the smaller nations, and even France, would not agree to this, regarding submarines as the weapons of nations that could not afford big surface vessels.

(3) But the third main difference was that though in theory accepting

² The summary is that of the *Liberal Magazine* of July 1932, p. 323.

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the abolition of bombing aircraft she stipulated for an exception in the case of bombers engaged on "police" duty on the confines of empire. Her spokesmen explained that bombing tribesmen on the North-West Frontier of India and marauding Arabs elsewhere was both more merciful and cheaper than dealing with them in the older way.³

Our neighbours, when this sort of ineptness displays itself in our statesmen, talk of British hypocrisy. It is not hypocrisy but utter lack of imagination. Could our Government ever have imagined that our neighbours would agree to let us build bombers and train their pilots under a promise to use them only against Afridis and Arabs while those of them who have no backward territories needing "policing" should have none? The alternatives were to abolish bombing from the air or not to abolish it, and the British plea for police bombers was a plea, as has been found out in the sequel, for the retention of bombing—in Abyssinia, in Spain, in Poland, and ultimately in Britain, in France, in Germany, in Italy, in Greece. And could anyone of even a child's imagination have defeated a plan that London and Berlin and Paris and all the other teeming centres of population should cease to be liable to bombing from the air in order that we could save a little money and a few lives on the confines of empire? Here is something to ponder upon when nightly we "black out," insert our ear plugs and bury ourselves in "deep shelters" in imitation of the cities of the dead.

What did the Conference think of the proposed exception? Said *The Times* of May 30, 1933, "The British delegate's attitude found no support."

This country has in fact been brought into the unusual position of being the one to hold up progress. In the chapter on Air Armaments, which was reached last week, the British Draft Convention proposes, in its opening Article, "the complete abolition of bombing from the air (except for police purposes in certain outlying regions)." The sentence in parentheses has found no support outside the British delegation. On the contrary, it was attacked from many quarters with more than the usual frankness; and even Mr. Eden's able reply failed to silence the critics. Unless fresh instructions are sent to the British delegate from London and the conversations now proceeding produce some

³ For a careful and temperate examination of the philosophy, practice and results of bombing on the North-West Frontier of India and the alternative policy for dealing with restless (and often starving) tribesmen advocated by enlightened Indian opinion, see *The North-West Frontier of India*, by Carl Heath (Friends' Peace Literature Committee, Friends House).

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unexpected compromise, the Disarmament Conference is likely to be once more immobilised in deadlock.

Neither then nor at any later time were fresh instructions sent out, Yet, as Dr. Gilbert Murray pointed out,⁴

Apart from the special interests and perils of Great Britain, we should also remember that more than any other weapon the bombing aeroplane creates insecurity. No other weapon can cross frontiers and strike at the very heart of an enemy nation with such complete suddenness and surprise. If we keep alive the practice of bombing we make it almost impossible for Europe to attain the security which is its greatest need.

By September 1933, British isolation on this issue had become still more pronounced. We had the backing only of Siam and Iraq.

The American delegation was amongst those who denounced the British reservation in impressive terms: France with her African Empire is against it too. And a great mass of opinion in Great Britain has expressed itself against the policy.⁵

But Britain might have been a Totalitarian State rather than a democracy for all the difference it made to "our" delegates at Geneva.

The one respectable excuse for having defeated this reform is the assertion that Germany would have built and used bombers just the same whether or not she and we had promised not to. That view points not merely to the uselessness of forbidding bombing aeroplanes but to the uselessness of any agreement whatever at a Disarmament Conference, including the whole of the British proposals as well as the American.

The Conference never recovered the momentum set up when President Hoover treated it seriously—no doubt the Russia of 1931 did so too but no one else, unfortunately, took it seriously. The British attitude, especially in this matter of air bombing, went far to weaken belief in the conferring nations in each other's sincere desire to achieve disarmament at the cost of their particular "interests" on the short view, or that these interests would ever be allowed to give place to the supreme general interest of the world peace.

The new British Draft Treaty to which the Conference switched over in March 1933 from that of its own Preparatory Commission

⁴ In a letter to *The Times* on June 7, 1933.

⁵ Arnold-Forster, *The Intelligent Man's Way*, p. 441.

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retained the British proposals slightly modified as to battleships but with no modification as to bombers. When Germany left Geneva they had got no farther and—months later, in May 1934—"it had become evident that the British and French Governments were in fundamental disagreement on the security issue, and the prospects of progress at the Conference were slight."⁶ And on June 27th, in the House of Lords, Lord Londonderry, champion of bombing for savages, said that

We can no longer hope that an international convention will solve the problems which agitate the whole of Europe. His Majesty's Government have therefore decided that they can no longer delay the steps which are necessary to provide adequately for the air defence of these shores.

By this time most of the principal delegates had left Geneva and a final breakdown appeared to be imminent. "It was decided, however, that the Conference should continue in being, in the hope that in due course Germany would re-join the Conference, and further progress could be made."⁶

In 1936 the Assembly of the League

decided that the Conference Bureau should be summoned to see if it could put a finish to the real measure of agreement on questions such as regulation of the arms traffic. The Bureau, or steering committee of the Conference, met May 31, 1937 (its last meeting was November 24, 1934). It decided that the general political and economical situation, made it useless for the Conference to be re-opened as yet, but that the Draft Convention, already largely agreed upon in principle concerning (1) publicity for national defence expenditure, (2) the working of an organ of supervision and co-ordination, was a suitable subject for an agreement which could stand as a first step. The Governments who attended the Conference were therefore asked whether they were prepared to accept a system of publicity based on this Convention.⁷

And the 1937 Assembly

urged its members to adopt the Convention, and examine how far internal measures for effective supervision of the trade in arms could be taken on the basis of the work already done on these lines by the Special Conference Commission.⁸

During 1938 about thirty countries replied on this subject. Some of the replies were entirely negative. The great majority of the States were favourable to the principle, but many, while expressing their

⁶ *Liberal Magazine* for 1934, pp. 240, 305.

⁷ *What the League Has Done*, p. 50.

⁸ The same.

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agreement, stated that their definite acceptance of the Convention would be dependent on its being generally accepted by Governments, or at least by the principal military and naval Powers.⁹

The Assembly was able to note that a large number of States exercised effective supervision over the manufacture of and trade in arms and that organisation of that supervision had been notably affected by the work of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. The Assembly asked those Governments which had not already done so to give effect to the recommendations before the next session. It also requested Members of the League to inform the Secretary-General of any modification of their legislation or their administrative methods relating to the matter.¹⁰

Thus was the pitifully meagre harvest of the Conference gleaned. Mr. Arthur Henderson, the devoted Chairman of the Conference, died on October 20, 1935, a deeply disappointed man.

⁹ *The League from Year to Year, 1938*, pp. 54, 55, 56.

¹⁰ The same.

CHAPTER XIII

Ethiopia

Simultaneously with the momentous happenings in Berlin and in Geneva described in the last three chapters, the second crucial dispute which the League failed to settle to its own ultimate undoing was dragging its weary length. But because it seemed to concern only Africa, as the first concerned Asia only, and not—directly—Europe, its crucial importance was missed at the time by the world at large.

Italy had coveted Ethiopia (Abyssinia) for forty years after she had failed to conquer it when the other European Powers were cutting up Africa into "Spheres of Influence." Before the Great War France had given Britain a free hand in Egypt in return for Britain's giving France a free hand in Morocco to the exclusion of Germany (one of the constituents of the trouble producing the Great War).¹ Similarly, both tended to recognise Italy's interest in Ethiopia from the first, and later a Tripartite Treaty was arrived at in 1906 formally recognising Italy's interest in Ethiopia but recording Britain's interest in Lake Tana in the north-west as a source of the Blue Nile and France's interest in the eastern strip behind Jibuti.

But then Ethiopia was admitted to the League of Nations in 1923, which meant that all precedents by which territories could be "conveyed" from African to European ownership could no longer apply there and that Britain, France *and* Italy became severally pledged to "respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence" of Ethiopia.

Yet two years later Britain and France made a new treaty with Italy which, while declaring their intention to maintain the *status quo* in Ethiopia, indicated the arrangements which should follow any disturbance of the *status quo*—and these arrangements followed the lines of the Treaty of 1906. Moreover, the three Powers promised each other mutual support on those same lines—whenever the *status quo* should unfortunately be disturbed.

We know that the *status quo* was disturbed by one of the signatories

¹ See *Our Ultimate Aim in the War* (see page 10 above), Chapter VIII, "Secret Diplomacy in Practice," p. 116.

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of the Tripartite Treaty. What did the other two signatories do then? Did they stick to their Covenant pledge or did they stick to their promise (defying their Covenant pledge) to the third signatory of the Tripartite Treaty?

Italy's reaction to this dilemma was simplicity itself. She continued to act as if there were no Covenant at all and it was obvious that she assumed that the other two would do the same, though she signed a Treaty of Arbitration with Ethiopia in 1928. Mussolini's own Field-Marshal, De Bono, testifies that preparations for Ethiopia's conquest went on steadily from 1932.

The customary frontier incident occurred at Walwal in November 1934. The Ethiopian Emperor appealed first to the Treaty of Arbitration and then to the League in 1935, successively under Articles XI, X and XV. The Council tried conciliation (about Walwal), but Mussolini broke away in June. Troops began to assemble in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, speeded by speeches by Mussolini and resolutions by the Fascist Party.

What did Britain and France do *then*? On the surface this is what happened. A report of an investigation set on foot by the Assembly in August having whitewashed both Governments of responsibility for Walwal, Britain, France and Italy (the signatories of the Tripartite Treaty) "agreed to negotiate," though, by Italy's demand, without Ethiopia, but the proposals of Britain and France to Italy were rejected by Italy herself, and in September the Assembly appointed a Conciliation Committee of Five which drew up a scheme by which Ethiopia was to accept foreign advisers to control her political and economic life. Ethiopia provisionally accepted the scheme (so complete was her trust of the League and of Britain), but Italy refused it. The Council then drafted a report on the dispute under Article XV.

During the summer it became clear that Russia and the smaller States were in favour of League settlement. Britain had incurred Italian hostility by working for settlement since May, and in August therefore she sent strong reinforcements to the British fleet in the Mediterranean. France favoured Italy and wished to let her have a free hand in Ethiopia. But on September 11th Sir Samuel Hoare made his speech to the Assembly. He stated that Britain stood for "steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression." He was followed by the majority of League members, including France, who pledged fidelity to the Covenant.

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The League was asserting itself once more, and it was time, for Italy invaded Ethiopia on October 3rd. On October 7th the Council adopted its Report under Article XV, which proved clearly that Ethiopia had consistently sought peaceful settlement and Italy as consistently refused it, and the Council members separately accepted a Report that Italy had gone to war in violation of the Covenant. Then Ethiopia appealed to Article XVI. The Assembly adopted the Report, only Austria, Hungary, Albania and Paraguay dissenting, so that Article XVI became automatically applicable. The Assembly appointed a Committee to organise sanctions, thus arriving at the point on which it broke down regarding Manchuria.

Fifty nations agreed to the embargo on exports of arms and on loans and credits to Italy and prohibited the import of Italian goods. The embargo covering transport animals, rubber, tin, nickel and other alloy metals, but these sanctions only came into force six weeks after Italy's invasion began (without a declaration of war, by the by), that is, on November 18th (Britain's financial sanctions began on October 29th). An embargo on oil, coal, iron and steel was to be imposed after an inquiry as to whether it was practicable, and an embargo on oil was the thing that mattered supremely.

In an interview published in Paris in October, Sir Austen Chamberlain (who was not then in office) said that to maintain the League Covenant Britain was ready to stand by measures that might be necessary, of whatever character they might be.

"Of whatever character they may be?" asked the interviewer with surprise. "M. Laval has declared that France will not take part in military sanctions under any conditions."

Sir Austen replied calmly: "We are astonished and—why not say it?—shocked by the apparent hesitation and egotistical considerations which seem to characterise the French attitude in the affair."

And Lord Cecil said:

The business of the League of Nations was to stop war and to use whatever means might be necessary. The measures must be sufficient to stop Italy. So far as one could see from this country, the really effective thing would be to cut the communications between Italy and Africa so that she could no longer maintain the great force which was at that moment attacking Abyssinia. If the League failed there was no other way in which the peace of the world could be secured.

Then, after a General Election at home (see next chapter), the

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bombshell descended of the Hoare-Laval proposals of December 1935. These were killed by a spontaneous burst of anger in Britain itself. They proposed that Italy should have outright a large slice of Ethiopia and that an Italian chartered company should exploit most of the rest. The proposals were published in Paris before the British Cabinet had even seen them—the final draft, that is, we must take it, for they must have been on the stocks for months. The Cabinet momentarily adopted them till it saw their unpopularity, when it apologetically dropped them and Sir Samuel Hoare left the Cabinet—for six months only.

Even the incomplete sanctions halved Italian trade with the countries that imposed them, but after the Italian victories Britain announced that she was now in favour of dropping them—the oil embargo was never imposed. "Had the oil sanctions been imposed," says Dr. Gilbert Murray, "Italy would have had to retire from Abyssinia. There might have been a change of Government in Italy, leading to a reassertion of the monarchy. The League would have successfully maintained the reign of law, and Austria, Spain and Czechoslovakia would probably have been left in peace."² A special Assembly voted the end of sanctions in spite of the appeal for help made to it by the Emperor in person. The epitaph of these sanctions might well have been:

If we were so soon to be done for,
What were we ever begun for?

An attempt to exclude Ethiopia from the September (1936) Assembly was defeated by a vote and it remained a member of the League.

Early in 1936 the Italians won a series of "victories," advancing in the south-eastern plains and in the north from Adowa. "The main Ethiopian armies, almost unarmed, offered a mass target to artillery. Italy's success, however, was mainly due to violation of the laws of war":³

Open towns and villages, and foreign Red Cross units, were destroyed by air bombardment. The countryside was sprayed with corrosive yperite gas, which killed man and beast in torment. The people were demoralised, the military chiefs disagreed. The Emperor, worn out, left the country on May 2nd. Addis Ababa, on his orders, was looted behind him. It was entered on May 5th by Italian troops. Mussolini declared the country annexed. There was guerilla fighting

² From an article on "Anthony Eden" in the *Picture Post* of October 7, 1939.

³ *What the League Has Done*, p. 21.

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in the mountains in the winter of 1936. But organised defence was impossible, and hope of applying the Covenant faded when Great Britain accredited a consul to the Italian Government in Addis Ababa, and signed a treaty of friendship with Italy in January 1937.

That is the bewildering story of the failure of the League to defend one of the youngest and the most trustful of its members, as far as the public knew it. What was the explanation and how did Britain and France deal with their special dilemma? Well, the Covenant was wrecked and Italy had taken her "sphere of influence" and a little more—apparently quarrelling with her co-signatories of the Tripartite Treaty. How far did this quarrel really go? What, in fact, was Britain's part?

1. Britain did nothing to stop the equipment of Italy's illegal invasion. Even during the two months before the invasion "the supply of military equipment poured into Massowa and Italian Somaliland from Britain as well as from every other country."⁴ Even the transport of poison gas, which Italy had promised not to use, was not interfered with. The Italians had openly declared the passage of 260 tons of yperite (mustard gas) through the Suez Canal during the first four months of the war.⁵

2. On the other hand, Britain did nothing for the equipment of Ethiopia but entered into the conspiracy to keep her unarmed. The Emperor, in an appeal to the League in August (two months before the invasion), while pointing out that Italy was "continuing to send troops and ammunition to East Africa" and "ceaselessly manufacturing arms and implements of war, with the openly avowed intention of using them against the Ethiopian Empire," pointed out that

there is no manufacture in Ethiopia, either public or private, of arms and munitions of war. The Imperial Ethiopian Government to-day finds it absolutely impossible to obtain means of defence outside our frontiers. Wherever it attempts to obtain them it is met with prohibition and export embargoes.

And again,

While Badoglio [the Italian general] was collecting an enormous army for his final march to Addis Ababa, the British were holding up the passage of a few thousand rifles through Berbera, and the French were making it impossible to take even revolvers and gas-masks

⁴ *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, by G. T. Garratt, Penguin Books Limited, p. 69.

⁵ The same, p. 109.

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into Ethiopia by railway or aeroplane. Passengers were not allowed to take any arms from Jibuti to Addis Ababa. A Red Cross 'plane was delayed for several days in France because seven gas-masks were discovered for the four occupants.⁶

3. Britain issued a special Order in Council to prevent British nationals from going to the help of Ethiopia or from any activity however remotely connected with war, not only in Ethiopia but also in surrounding countries.

By the middle of September a very large number of men had offered their services to the [Ethiopian] Ambassador. When the obviously undesirables had been weeded out, it would undoubtedly have been possible to collect a force of about five thousand men somewhat on the lines of the international brigade in Spain, but of a different type—more Irish and Germans, more old soldiers and a large mixture of sheer adventurers. The writer worked through a number of these applications at the Ethiopian Embassy.⁷

4. While thus blocking any practical help, Britain was giving Ethiopia advice which Mussolini could not have bettered from his point of view if he himself had been the adviser.

All through the period when Ethiopia should have been raising loans, buying arms, and organising a foreign legion, each of which was then possible, her Ambassador in England was being urged by our Foreign Office not to do anything which might "complicate the international situation" and "make our task more difficult." . . . [Its Ambassador proved] an easy victim to the blandishments of Mr. Eden, and the cheery exhortations of Foreign Office officials who told him not to worry, and assured him that England would "see him through."⁸

5. While professing to support "sanctions" against Italy, Britain acquiesced in France's refusal to impose the oil embargo, the one measure which would have stopped the invasion dead.

6. From first to last Britain took every opportunity, using League of Nations machinery where possible, to press for a settlement on the lines of the original "spheres of influence" agreement with Italy long before the League was in existence. The Hoare-Laval proposals were on those lines. Mr. Baldwin said afterwards for the Cabinet that "we none of us liked the proposals: we thought they went too far." But they endorsed them the same day they received their text and the

⁶ The same, pp. 109, 110.

⁷ The same, p. 70.

⁸ The same, p. 69.

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next day (December 10th) the British Minister at Addis Ababa was instructed that

You should use your utmost influence to induce the Emperor to give careful and favourable consideration to these proposals and on no account lightly reject them. On the contrary I feel sure that he will give further proof of his statesmanship by realising the advantage of the opportunity of negotiation which they afford, and will avail himself thereof,

though the same afternoon Mr. Baldwin told the House of Commons that as far as he knew no communication of any kind had gone to Rome or Addis Ababa.

The Emperor rejected them, it is said, because such a settlement would have made Ethiopia "a protected State" when neither the League nor Britain could any longer have protected her, and the conquest proceeded, for, of course, when Ethiopia refused the terms which the British Cabinet "had not liked," the British Cabinet did not try again.

As Mr. Wellington Koo on Manchuria, so Sir Austen Chamberlain (but before the breakdown) on Ethiopia, foretold the effect of the League's betrayal. Speaking in regard first to Germany, he said,⁹ defining "economic sanctions,"

I mean the employment of the blockade, which is an act of war; and nothing short of an effective blockade—with all that that involves—would make economic sanctions effective.

It is not to be supposed that the League can be flouted under the eyes of Europe, that the League methods can be repudiated, a policy of force and conflict engaged in, and that the League can pass all that by, because it happened to occur in Africa and not in Europe, and cannot by so doing destroy the value of the Collective Security not only for Africa but for Europe.

In the last resort we have to take our decision at the Council table at Geneva. We have to take the risk of saying, "We are prepared to fulfil our obligations under the Covenant if others will do the same." We ought to say that openly to the Council even at the risk that others may refuse. If we have to use that language and others are offended by it and we come home empty-handed, that much we owe to the honour of the British name and to the efforts that our successive Governments have made to make the League of Nations a real force in international life in the interests of peace and security for us all.

⁹ In the House of Commons, July 11, 1935.

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And similarly Mr. Eden said:¹⁰

If in the judgment of world opinion the League fails in this dispute its authority for the future will be grievously shaken, and its influence seriously impaired, and the collapse of the League and of the new conception of international order for which it stands would be a world calamity.

Yet Mr. Eden was Foreign Secretary when Britain led in the abandonment of sanctions before they had been fully tried.

We did more than we did on Manchuria: we imposed some sanctions—too late and the most essential sanction (the embargo on oil) not at all—but refused to recognise that readiness to use force to maintain sanctions was essential to the whole idea underlying Article XVI. But, worst of all, the Hoare-Laval incident showed the spirit behind the fine Geneva talk in innermost Cabinet circles in London and Paris. We were Covenant men at Geneva but Mussolini's fellow-conspirators in the chancelleries. The Covenant had broken down in Asia and in Africa. Soon it was to be the turn of Europe.

¹⁰ In the League Council, September 4.

CHAPTER XIV

A General Election and its Sequel

Parliament was prorogued on October 25, 1935, and the new Parliament—that which has been sitting ever since—was elected on November 14th. In the Government Manifesto on which it went to the country it was declared:

The League of Nations will remain, as heretofore, the keystone of British Foreign policy. The prevention of war and the establishment of settled peace in the world must always be the most vital interest of the British people, and the League is the instrument which has been framed, and to which we look, for the attainment of these objects. We shall therefore continue to do all in our power to uphold the Covenant and to maintain and increase the efficiency of the League. . . .

Our attitude to the League is dictated by the conviction that Collective Security by collective action can alone save us from a return to the old system which resulted in the Great War.

There were other passages in this Manifesto, it is true, to which we return later.

And the whole election was fought under the banner of Sir Samuel Hoare's speech at the Assembly of the League of Nations two months earlier (September 6th). Sir Samuel Hoare said:

It is because, as practicable people, the British believe that Collective Security founded on international agreement is the most effective safeguard of peace that they would be gravely disturbed if the new instrument that has been forged were blunted or destroyed. His Majesty's Government and the British people maintain their support of the League and its ideals as the most effective way of ensuring peace, and this belief in the necessity of preserving the League is our sole interest in the present controversy. No selfish or imperialist motives enter into our minds at all. . . .

The two principal conditions in which the system of Collective Security is designed to operate are, first, that the members of the League shall have reduced their armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations; and, secondly, that the possibility is open, through the machinery of the League, for the modification by consent and by peaceful means of international conditions whose continuance might

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be a danger to peace. . . . Finally, to complete the system, there is the obligation to take collective action to bring war to an end. . . .

In conformity with its precise and explicit obligations the League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression.

Mr. Baldwin, then Prime Minister, at his first election meeting, declared that "our loyalty is to the Covenant of the League," but added some minor qualifications, as they seemed to be then, to which too we shall have to refer later, which, however, did not affect the impression at the time that the Government the country was confirming in power was a 100 per cent League and Covenant Government, though doubtless they ought to have done so.

It was exactly a month after the election that the Hoare-Laval betrayal of Ethiopia was published and the movement for the abolition of sanctions against Italy began, and it was six months after that (June 10, 1936) that the man who was to be Prime Minister in less than twelve months and was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, was talking of "the League of Nations and the policy of Collective Security to which we have given so whole-hearted a support with such disappointing results." Yet "we" had carefully avoided the supporting procedure prescribed by the Covenant and had omitted the one embargo—on oil—that would certainly have reduced the aggressor to impotence.

But Mr. Chamberlain said:

The policy of Collective Security based on sanctions has been tried out . . . and it has failed to prevent war, failed to stop war, failed to save the victim from the aggressor. I am not blaming anyone for the failure [!], I merely record it now because I think it is time that we reviewed the history of these events and sought to draw what lessons and conclusions we can from these events.

I want to put to you one or two conclusions which seem to me may fairly be drawn. There are some people who do not desire to draw any conclusions at all. I see, for instance, that the other day the President of the League of Nations Union [Lord Cecil of Chelwood] issued a circular to its members in which he said that the issue hung in the balance and urged them to commence a campaign of pressure upon Members of Parliament and members of the Government with the idea that if we were to pursue the policy of sanctions and even to intensify it, it was still possible to preserve the independence of Abyssinia.

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This seems to me the very midsummer of madness. If we were to pursue it it would only lead to further misfortunes which would divert our minds as practical men from seeking other and better solutions. There is no reason why, because the policy of Collective Security in the circumstances in which it was tried has failed, we should therefore abandon the idea of the League and give up the ideals for which the League stands. But if we have retained any vestige of common sense, surely we must admit that we have tried to impose upon the League a task which it was beyond its power to fulfil.

So ended Collective Security enforced by sanctions. Having refused to allow the League to apply sanctions as prescribed to Japan and Italy and having failed to suggest any other method of enforcing the Covenant, the pronouncement went forth that we had tried to impose upon the League a task which it was beyond its powers to fulfil. And by 1938 Mr. Chamberlain could bring himself to say:

We must not try to delude small, weak nations into thinking that they will be protected by the League against aggression and acting accordingly when we know that nothing of the kind can be expected.¹

And again:

However much we may sympathise with a small nation confronted by a big, powerful neighbour we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in war simply on her account: if we have to fight *it must be on larger issues than that!*²

From the dropping of sanctions against Italy onwards "we" did not try to impose on the League any task at all—one does not remember the Chamberlain Government, "as practical men, seeking other and better solutions" of the problem of freeing Ethiopia from the aggressor: on the contrary, they made an agreement with the aggressor over the victim's trade. We swung over to "the old system which resulted in the Great War"—as administered by Mr. Chamberlain with only nominal help from a Foreign Secretary—and without consulting the country which had just confirmed the Covenant as embodying Britain's foreign policy.

But let us go back to the Government Manifesto and the then Prime Minister's speeches to see whether there were not passages there which may throw light on this *volte-face* not noticed at the time.

¹ In the House of Commons, February 22, 1938.

² In a broadcast speech, September 27, 1938.

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In the Manifesto this was said:

In the present unhappy dispute [*sic*] between Italy and Abyssinia there will be no wavering in the policy we have hitherto pursued. We shall take no action in isolation, but we shall be prepared faithfully to take our part in any collective action decided upon by the League and shared in by its members. We shall endeavour to further any discussions which may offer the hope of a just and fair settlement, provided that it be within the framework of the League and acceptable to the three parties to the dispute—Italy, Abyssinia and the League itself.

Eschewing isolation, “we” joined Italy in seeking to secure acceptance of the surrender of its territory by Ethiopia and led the States we had encouraged to impose sanctions in the abandonment of Ethiopia to Mussolini, having failed to find “a just and fair settlement” acceptable to Italy when she was getting all she wanted by the poison gas forbidden by the League.

And then Mr. Baldwin (as he then was), in the speech saying that “our loyalty is to the Covenant of the League,” said also:³

We have heard much of the word sanctions. . . . The extreme form of sanctions is preventing any goods getting into the country at all against which the League is imposing sanctions. It could only be done by blockade. If the United States or Germany or Japan wished to sell goods in the country which was being blockaded, unless they advised their subjects that they were not to trade with that country, with every shipload they sent out there would be a real risk of war with that country.

That situation does not arise now. I do not believe it can arise in the present case, but it is inseparable from the League of Nations as at present constituted. I would never sanction this country’s indulging in a blockade of this kind unless assured of sympathetic support at least of these great neutral countries.

This should have been recognised at the time as a measured declaration against any imposition of sanctions at all and should have been challenged as such. Of these “three great neutrals” one had rejected the Covenant with its sanctions after the head of its Government had helped to compile it; another became a “neutral” when these very sanctions (authorised by the Covenant she had signed) became applicable to her; and the third withdrew from the League only two years before (her notice having only just expired) and had

³ At Bewdley on October 19, 1935.

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since pointedly broken nearly every clause in the Covenant. And remember *why* Germany withdrew and so became "a neutral" in Lord Baldwin's sense. She withdrew because Britain and France failed to carry out their pledge regarding the reduction of their own armaments while refusing to allow Germany to seek equality with them.

Assuredly, if the approval of these three States was necessary for its operation, the Covenant was as dead as mutton and talk about our "loyalty to the Covenant of the League" could have no meaning whatever. (But did Mr. Baldwin ever actually invite the sympathetic support of any of the three—America, for instance?) Really this speech, properly interpreted, was the slaying of the League.

That Manifesto launching an electoral campaign in support of the Covenant had this passage also:

Our influence can be fully exerted only if we are recognised to be strong enough to fulfil any obligations which, jointly with others, we may undertake. . . . We have made it clear that we must in the course of the next few years do what is necessary to repair the gaps in our defences which have accumulated over the past decade, and we shall in due course present to Parliament our proposals. . . . The defence programme will be strictly confined to what is required to make the country and the Empire safe, and to fulfil our obligations towards the League.

This was supported by a passage in Mr. Baldwin's speech in Parliament on the eve of the election. Speaking of the dispute with Italy on Ethiopia, he said (on October 23rd):

The lessons of this crisis have made it clear to us that in the interests of world peace it is essential that our defensive Services should be stronger than they are to-day. . . . It is a strengthening of our defensive Services within the framework of the League for the sake of international peace, not for selfish ends. It is a greater measure of preparedness to meet the risks which are inherent in the situation. . . .

While I am prepared to pursue that [the League of Nations] policy with all my heart and soul, I will not pursue it, and I will not be responsible for the conduct of any Government in this country at this present time, if I am not given power to remedy the deficiencies which have accrued in our defensive Services since the war.

This speech marks the point at which the ideal of Collective Security ceased finally, as far as our Government is concerned, to be put forward as a reason for disarmament and began to be pleaded as *the* reason, on the other hand, for *re*-armament. Germany was re-arming, seeking an equality with the other Powers which those Powers

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had refused her by the method which the Covenant prescribed of disarmament to the level of Germany. From 1936 onward Collective Security, the Covenant and sanctions were never mentioned by those in power here in any other connection than the compelling reason for re-armament. The extent of the contemplated programme was kept dark (like the Hoare-Laval proposals) till the General Election was safely over. But the new Parliament, elected to support a League of Nations policy, was switched over into a Parliament for military preparations for a foreseen war with Germany,⁴ who was once more upsetting the balance of power.

The suggestion was that the lack of rearmament rendered it impossible to impose embargoes on Japan and Italy. But was it true that that was beyond the strength of existing British resources? Well-informed opinion at the time and after it denied and denies it, and quotations follow to that effect from the impressive books of two ex-servants of the League itself whose whole account of the happenings since the founding of the League will be a permanent contribution to history. Says Sir Arthur Salter⁵ of the Ethiopian crisis:

As long as Egypt and the Suez Canal are not under her control, Italy cannot succour her forces in East Africa and, as long as a strong British fleet is in being at Malta, she is cut off from Libya and the Dodecanese.

⁴ "From 1933 I and my friends were all very worried about what was happening in Europe. . . . You will remember at that time there was probably a stronger pacifist feeling running through the country than at any time since the War. . . . My position as the leader of a great party was not altogether a comfortable one. I asked myself . . . what chance was there within the next year or two of that feeling being so changed that the country would give a mandate for rearmament? Supposing I had gone to the country and said that Germany was rearming and that we must rearm, does anybody think that this pacific democracy would have rallied to that cry at that moment? I cannot think of anything that would have made the loss of the election from my point of view more certain. . . ."

"All I did was to take a moment perhaps less unfortunate than another might have been, and we won the election with a large majority; but frankly I could conceive that we should at that time, by advocating certain courses, have been a great deal less successful. We got from the country—with a large majority—a mandate for doing a thing that no one, twelve months before, would have believed possible. It is my firm conviction that had the Government, with this great majority, used that majority to do anything that might be described as arming without a mandate—and they did not do anything, except the slightly increased air programme for which they give their reasons—had I taken such action that my Right Honourable Friend [Mr. Churchill] desired me to take, it would have defeated entirely the end I had in view."—Mr. Baldwin in the House of Commons on November 12, 1936.

⁵ *Security: Can We Retrieve It?* (Macmillan), p. 73.

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(We had a very strong fleet at Malta during the Ethiopian crisis.) And Mr. de Madariaga,⁶ showing that the trouble was not the lack of strength but the lack of promptness, says:

In the case of Japan *v.* China (Manchuria) as well as in the case of Italy *v.* Abyssinia, the nations contemplating aggression played for time, arguing that it was best to allow them to solve the difficulty by means of direct negotiations, i.e. putting forward exactly the kind of arguments which Article XI explicitly sets out to bar out of court. In both cases the Powers were unable to resist the political pressure of the aggressor nations, a fact which allowed these nations to accumulate the weapons to crush the defence of the attacked State and render nugatory the system of Collective Security. . . . [In Ethiopia] again the League had failed because sanctions, though applied, had not been fully applied, and the aggressor State knew they would not be fully applied.

No, the fact was that neither Mr. Baldwin nor Sir John Simon nor Mr. Neville Chamberlain thought that either China or Ethiopia or—later—Spain or Czechoslovakia were worth the possible risk of war, Britain's security or vital interests (as they saw them) not being threatened. Poland, as we shall see, was another story, but that was only because it was the last of a series of self-aggrandisement on Germany's part—which would never have been reached if Britain had been loyal to the Covenant from the first. Meanwhile the British people had elected another Parliament which they believed to be pledged to the fulfilment of the Covenant. Before the General Election there had been an impressive Peace Ballot (intimidating to Mr. Baldwin) and after it a rising of public opinion in denunciation of the Hoare-Laval betrayal (equally intimidating to Mr. Baldwin). The Government (Mr. Baldwin's) professed itself impressed and to wish to act in accordance with popular opinion thus expressed. Popular opinion went to sleep again and was thenceforward ignored. Why not? It awoke over Munich and the declaration of war—in a dazed condition—but then it was too late. It was not fully awake till the disaster in France.

⁶ *The World's Design* (George Allen & Unwin), pp. 152, 171.

CHAPTER XV

Spain

Between July 1936, when the "Civil War" broke out in Spain, and February 1939, when the President of the Republic resigned on the "irrevocable loss" of the war, Italy, by her own subsequent avowal, gave the following support to the rebels:¹

Altogether 149 Italian war vessels took part and undertook 850 missions. In the four months from mid-December 1936 to mid-April 1937 [only] 100,000 men, 4,370 motor vehicles, 40,000 tons of war material and 750 guns were carried to Spain in 52 steamers, four hospital ships, and 40 naval units were employed in keeping the army supplied and in bringing home 14,858 sick and wounded.

"Although prolonged for over thirty-two months," it was naïvely stated, "the activities of the Italian fleet had to be kept dark because of the political needs of the moment." "The political needs of the moment" were the necessity of denying the dispatch of *any* troops (volunteers were a different matter) to a wilfully credulous British Prime Minister. It will be noted that no total of the troops sent is given—only those for four months. How much greater than 100,000 these must have been we can only guess. That they were troops and not volunteers was proved again and again by the papers found on the prisoners and the dead.

In reporting the departure of the Italian airmen from Spain at the end of the war a boast was made in Rome of their contribution to the victory:²

It is stated that altogether 5,699 officers and men of the Italian Air Force took part in the campaign, besides 312 civilians. Legionary airmen carried out 5,318 bombardments, hit 224 enemy ships during air attacks, and brought down 903 enemy machines, while losing only 86 of their own. Those killed in action numbered 175 and those wounded 102.

Herr Hitler, on June 6, 1939, reviewed 18,000 German troops who had "returned in triumph" from Spain. He told them that, in response

¹ *Forze Armate*, weekly review quoted by the *Manchester Guardian*, June 9, 1939.

² *The Times*, June 12, 1939.

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to an appeal from General Franco, "in July 1936 I decided to fulfil the request for help which this man sent and to take an active part in the war." "It was painful to us," he said, "to keep silence about your battles through all these years." So silent had he to be that men ordered to take part in "embarkation manœuvres" found themselves landed in Spain without being able to take leave of their families or arrange their affairs.³

But after thirty-two months of steady lying Italy and Germany confessed—boasted—of the large-scale invasion of Spain. No one believes now that the Powers did not know. What are their "secret services" and their open diplomatic and consular services for if not to send home such information? And the League Covenant was still in existence, obliging its signatories to "respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League" (Article X).

"Should any member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants above it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League, which hereby undertake sanctions" (Article XVI). No other member of the League "undertook" sanctions. Why not? As no one will deny at this time of day, (1) because no one wished to recognise that these covenant-breakers *had* "committed an act of war" against it and so refused to recognise it in spite of the Covenant, and (2) because it chose to consider that in the interest of European "peace" it was better that Spain should stew in its own juice. That, at any rate, was the attitude of the British Government, and it contrived to induce successive French Governments to take the same view. Of course they avoided *saying* these things as much as possible and for the most part contented themselves with the assertions (1) that in essence the war was a civil war in which both sides alike had induced foreign volunteers to come over and help them, and (2) that the evidence of the extent of the invasion was not clear.

It would be useless to controvert now in detail these contentions; an immense amount has been written on them—mostly against them. But it seems necessary to set forth what are now practically

³ Mr. Garratt (in *Mussolini's Roman Empire*) tells of a young German doctor whom he met casually on the road in Spain who was doing his military service. "His regiment had been ordered on embarkation manœuvres, and they found themselves sailing for Cadiz. He was so angry that he had deserted at Cadiz, found his way to the Government side and was in charge of an improvised 'tank.'" P. 184 (footnote).

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admitted on all sides after the controversial use of denying them has gone by.

On the establishment of the Republic in 1931, after the successive departures of the Dictator, Primo de Rivera, and King Alphonso, Spain was a hundred years behind Western civilisation and was still subject to the tyranny of the Army, the Church and the Grantees.

At the fall of the Monarchy the regular army numbered just over 100,000 men. It had 195 generals on the active list and 417 on the Reserve. There were 5,938 colonels and majors on the active list and 407 on the Reserve, over five thousand captains and nearly six thousand subalterns. This meant that there was an officer on the active list for every six soldiers. The figures are by President Azaña when Minister of War. These officers formed a parasite class kept by the nation and tenacious of their privileges.

The Church paralysed the intellectual life of the nation and was anathema to three-quarters of the population. A new catechism had laid it down that among the eleven deadly sins were Democracy, Protestantism, Socialism and Liberalism. "What sin is committed by him who votes for a Liberal candidate? Generally a mortal sin." All this was forced on primary and high schools by law by means of tests, only the universities remaining free.

The Grantees, the great landlords, many of them absentees, had no obligations to those who lived on their land in appalling poverty.

The first Cortes of the Republic cut down the lists of Army officers, disestablished the Church, and curbed the priests and allotted the land of the Grantees by purchase to peasant proprietors. Reaction followed and the Government (turned out later by the elections of 1936) reversed or suspended all these reforms.

When intellectual freedom came in 1931 "the country reflected all the shades of European opinion: anarchists, syndicalists, democrats, liberals, republican conservatives, agrarian socialists, revolutionary Marxists, communists, agrarian capitalists, intolerant Catholics, broad-minded Catholics, constitutional monarchists, modern fascists and worshippers of absolute monarchy."⁴ But the majority of 1936, despite many terrifying party names, stood mainly for agrarian reforms such as were adopted all over Eastern Europe after the Great War, emancipation from sacerdotal tyranny and from the preying of Army officers on the national revenues. Their supporters' main

⁴ Jose Castillejo, *Wars of Ideas in Spain*, quoted by Mr. Garratt on p. 132.

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crime was that they did not wait for the Parliamentary reversal of the retrogression of the reactionaries but acted on the legislation of the first Republican Cortes as if it had never been reversed; but they also took in hand the punishment of the retrogressors. Peasants seized holdings on the landed estates (often in friendly agreement with the landlords). Industrial workers strove to better their conditions by strikes. The most hated priests fell to private vengeance and when the Fascists used the churches as forts and storage for arms and news came of the bloody advance from the South of the revolted Army, churches were sacked and burnt according to established usage when revolutions were on!⁵ In short, the flood-gates were down.⁶

The Army had revolted, backed by the priests. They had their supporters among the landowners and the merchants and manufacturers, but Franco's forces were almost wholly military while the Government forces were made up of militia and volunteers of all classes—intellectuals, artists, townsmen and land-workers. The leaders of the Government were middle-class Liberals, reinforced and ultimately superseded by Socialists, but even the redoubtable Largo Caballero was a strong opponent of Communism.⁷ Amel Azaña, Minister for War under Zamora, remained President to the last.

On the other hand, among the insurgents, the Army officers were in power from first to last, out to establish a military autocracy. Others might help them, but that was the goal.

On General Mola's arrival at Burgos he addressed a meeting of officers and officials. "The Government, which will be established here

⁵ As to the burning of churches, Dr. Maria Montessori, the eminent Italian educationist (inventor of the Montessori Method), said, in a statement at Oxford: "Churches in Barcelona were on fire when I left. Barcelona was still in Government hands, but the priests had taken an active part in the fighting, and I believe most of the danger to the churches was caused by stocks of ammunition left inside by them" (*Oxford Mail*, August 1, 1936).

⁶ But by December the worst was over and order had been fully restored on the Government side (*Mussolini's Roman Empire*, p. 157).

⁷ Señor Uribe, a Communist, became Minister of Agriculture in September 1936, but he wisely did not try to start collective farming in that typical peasant country of Eastern Spain. He did not even begin to press the farmers of the "kulak" class, but he confirmed the breaking-up of the big estates, and only supported collective groups when they had been formed spontaneously. The landless workers would sometimes organise these collective farms, but the peasants showed little inclination to co-operate. Only in Catalonia did the Anarchists attempt State control of farming, and it was a failure. In spite of the war the general level of production in Eastern Spain has (in 1938) risen by over 10 per cent under Señor Vincent Uribe, a triumph for helping the peasant over his land problem, and then leaving him to get on with his work" (*Mussolini's Roman Empire*, p. 212).

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or at Pamplona, will, I think, have to be formed, not only by soldiers, but also by some civilian elements." "Not at all," interrupted a colonel, "it must be solely military, and that was the plan of the revolt. Under Clause six, that we all know, it was laid down that once the movement succeeded, each district would form its military committee, and from this would be formed a national assembly, composed exclusively from the army. (*Doy Fe*, quoted by Mr. Garratt.)

The Army began their campaign, helped by the Riffs they had brought from Morocco and the German-organised Foreign Legion, with a wholesale massacre of all suspected opponents, and wherever they went they were preceded by the mass flight of the population, so that there were well over two million refugees before the final flight to France when Barcelona fell. (The Vichy Government has sent the refugees back to face their fate.) To talk of a civil war in such circumstances—of a divided nation—is preposterous. It was the military *contra mundem* only supported—from the rear—by those who had lost their privileges and hoped to get them back through the slaughter of humbler compatriots by the Army.

But their humbler compatriots would have beaten the Army—but for the invasion by Italy and Germany. Constantly they got the upper hand, but the Dictators sent more and more men and munitions and equipment. Everyone knows now that the help sent from Russia—*after* the Italian invasion began—and the idealist volunteers from the democratic countries—also *after* the Fascist invasion—though they helped notably and gave the Government the opportunity to organise its own army, supplies and equipment, were never at any time to be compared with the "support" from the Dictators.⁸ Their total number from first to last was less than sixty thousand and half of them were killed before the end apart from the number wounded.⁹

⁸ The very signal for the revolt to begin was the arrival in Morocco, on July 17, 1936, of Italian aeroplanes bringing help that had been arranged for in Rome more than two years before. "The same day the Foreign Legion, with its German Nazi organisation, took charge of Larache" (*Mussolini's Roman Empire*, p. 145).

⁹ Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., had the following letter in the Press on June 24, 1939: "Yesterday I put the following question in Parliament:

"To ask the Prime Minister whether there is any evidence of substantial military intervention in Spain by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics prior to mid-October 1936."

The reply given by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Butler) was, 'No, Sir.'

"The significance of this should not be overlooked. In effect, it implies a definite denial of the charge repeatedly made by pro-Franco speakers and writers that Russian military

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The British Government, having decided that the Covenant was (for its own reasons) inapplicable, and was not to function, fostered the two untruths that the struggle was simply between Fascists and Communists and that both sides equally had secured outside aid. And it was on this basis that the British policy called "non-intervention" was based.

It worked, as the British policy in Ethiopia worked, in preventing supplies going to the legitimate Government in Spain and enabling Italy and Germany to carry out unhampered their policy of conquest. Any lie was accepted from Italy and Germany, triumphantly proved a lie by Italy and Germany themselves—after the lie had served its purpose. When they began torpedoing British ships our Government was spurred to temporary action and the Nyon agreement to stop piracy did pretty well stop the torpedoing of our ships, but that was succeeded by the bombing of them by air—which Mr. Chamberlain truly said was "not nice" to think of.

But then there were other things which were not nice to think of if one were weak enough to think of them. On June 13, 1938, the following letter was sent to the British Prime Minister by a "National Conference on Spain":

In the past four months the total number of civil population killed and wounded from air attack in open Spanish Government towns is reported to be close on 6,000—approximately 2,300 wounded and 3,800 killed. A large majority of these must have been, we fear, old people, women and children.

Last week the towns and villages all along the eastern coast of Spain endured a fresh series of daily, sometimes hourly, air raids. We would compare the loss of life in the smaller towns and villages with the reports from Barcelona over the same period. Here during heavy air raids the casualties have been comparatively small owing to the increasing effectiveness of the Government's anti-aircraft guns and

intervention preceded and provoked German and Italian intervention, which all the world now knows, from the very beginning of the Spanish conflict, i.e. from mid-July 1936. The British Government has been slow in acknowledging this, and my question was prompted by the fear that Mr. Butler might be thought to have given support to this ancient calumny against Russia by saying as recently as June 12th that:

"His Majesty's Government are well aware and have often stated that from the beginning of the civil war in Spain intervention on both sides was taking place on a considerable scale."

It appears now that he cannot have been referring to Russia. I still wonder from what other sources help to the Republican side 'on a considerable scale' is supposed to have come."

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defences. We would point out that the anti-aircraft gun is one weapon that is not a weapon of offence. If placed in areas popularly inhabited by a purely civilian population, its only purpose would be the defence of such a population against murderous air attack.

You, Sir, have repeatedly expressed your sympathy with the victims of these barbaric methods of warfare. The British Government was one of the first to respond to the appeal made last January by the French Prime Minister to the other Powers to put an end to those massacres. On February 2nd the then Foreign Secretary stated in the House that the Government contemplates an attempt to secure a general international agreement to this end. Since that time we can find no evidence that a single life has been saved as a result of international agreements.

We ask you therefore to take the immediate step of proposing to the Powers represented on the Non-Intervention Committee that anti-aircraft guns be removed from the list of goods controlled by the Non-Intervention Agreement. This would allow the Spanish Government to obtain much-needed means to defend its civil population.

We believe that this would be a practical step to stop these outrages you so frequently have deplored, and one which should be taken pending representations by the democratic Governments to those Powers who are supplying munitions and men for the perpetration of this crime against civilisation.

There were twenty-seven eminent signatories, headed by the Archbishop of York and the Duchess of Athol, M.P.

But of course nothing was done. And why should it be? The war was over (by these and other means) eight months later, and the Government had settled down to its policy of turning a blind eye to the steady reinforcements in men and material which Italy and Germany were giving to the rebels, while sitting with them on the committee whose business was nominally to secure non-intervention from all sources; and taking care that the Spanish Government, at any rate, did not get help—even putting every obstacle in the way of “Potato Jones” when he tried to relieve the famine among the besieged Basques and Asturians—to the end of the sordid chapter.

Meanwhile, what was happening at Geneva?

In the Assembly of 1936 Spain protested against a non-intervention agreement, itself a violation of the legitimate right of Governments to purchase arms to suppress rebellion, and against its infraction by the Fascists. The League did nothing on this occasion.

Spain summoned a Special Council in November 1936, under Article XI, to protest against Italian interference with Spanish shipping. The Council asked the Non-Intervention Committee to make non-

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intervention effective, and sent a medical commission to report on care of refugees and the evacuation of Madrid.

In December 1936 and May 1937, Spain protested again. In May 1937, the Council urged the Non-Intervention Committee to strengthen control and to evacuate volunteers. In September, Spain appealed for the ending of non-intervention and for the opening of the frontiers to the Spanish Government. The Assembly drafted a report that "veritable army corps" of foreign soldiers were on Spanish soil. The report was defeated in the Assembly by two votes.¹⁰

On May 13, 1938, a Spanish motion inviting the Powers to abandon the policy of non-intervention was defeated by four votes to two, the remaining members of the Council abstaining. The motion was opposed by Britain, France, Poland and Rumania, and supported by Russia and Spain. (At the same meeting a kind resolution expressing sympathy with China and promising serious consideration of her appeals was adopted by the Council.)

But I would close this melancholy chapter of Spanish history with the passionate prophecy with which the book closes which was published in 1940¹¹ by the brilliant granddaughter of Don Antonio Maura, King Alfonso's long-suffering Conservative Prime Minister:

By now nobody in the world can doubt what we said over and over during the two and a half years of the war: the Spanish war was not a civil war, but the invasion of a peaceful democracy by Hitler and Mussolini. For both these dictators have boasted in public speeches of the triumph of Fascism in Spain; they have outlined in great detail the role they played in the defeat of my country since the first days of July 1936. And now, more than ever, I know that Spanish democracy is not dead—but still lives—and will always live. Franco has executed thousands. Even as I write these words, the firing squads are still shooting men and women who believe in democracy, at the rate of one every nine minutes, for twenty-four hours of the day. Thousands more still live in French concentration camps, hungry, suffering in forced idleness and misery.¹² But twelve million Spaniards lived in democratic Spain for two and a half years while the foreign invaders

¹⁰ *What the League Has Done*, pp. 22, 23.

¹¹ *In Place of Splendour: The Autobiography of a Spanish Woman*, by Constanca de la Mora (Michael Joseph), pp. 325, 426.

¹² "As your readers are probably aware, the Vichy Government is handing over all the Spanish refugees in France to the Falangist Government. On their arrival in Spain they are sorted: anyone who has in any way distinguished himself on the Republican side is tried for rebellion against France and executed. The remainder are either shot without trial or sent to concentration camps."—From a letter in *The New Statesman and Nation* of November 30, 1940.

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bombed our children and slaughtered our people. Franco cannot shoot the twelve million.

They will remember. Even now, the little news that comes out of Spain is always of the fight that the Spaniards inside the Fascist boundaries carry on day and night against the foreign oppressors. "Spain for the Spaniards! *Vive la Republica!*" These are the slogans that my countrymen fight under inside Franco Spain. In a dozen little newspapers still published in secret places, in the prisons, on the streets, in the homes, men and women write and sing and whisper these slogans. The Fascists cannot make Spaniards Fascist. We are a democratic people. We shall always be a democratic people. I know that Spain will soon again be free. Nothing can prevent it—for the united people of Spain will make a democracy with their blood and their courage. *Vive la Republica!*

The British Policy of "Appeasement"

Let us pause for a moment. Manchuria, Ethiopia and Spain are behind: Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland are in front, and, when the war has come, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium—and France—and the battle for Britain. What fills the gap? The "policy" of "appeasement." If we had not already destroyed Collective Security—the Policy of the Covenant—how useful could it have been in dealing with Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland?—in dealing with, or forestalling, Hitler, that is.

Mr. Chamberlain used to ask the critics of his Czechoslovak and Polish policies what his critics would have done in his place. That was a fair question to ask those who had till then been his supporters. Other critics could reply, "I should not have been in your place: I should have stuck to the Covenant from the beginning onwards."

Supposing we had practised "appeasement" with Stresemann and with those who continued the Stresemann policy?

Suppose we had carried out the Thoiry policy in 1926 instead of in 1930 or not at all?

Suppose we had carried out a disarmament policy while Germany was still disarmed, and, instead of arming for a clash, had helped Germany in her difficulties, as President Ebert asked, so that there need be no apprehension of a clash?

Suppose we had supported the civil Japanese Government against her insubordinate military men in 1931 before the military party had re-armed Japan and had sent Lord Lytton to make a League settlement between China and Japan?

Suppose we had pointed out to Mussolini that as Ethiopia *was* in the League he interfered at the peril of the extremest sanctions and offered, what Haile Selassie would so gladly have accepted, League help and advice in his civilising mission within his Empire?

Supposing the League had warned outsiders, two years before the event, that there must be no military intervention in internal quarrels in Spain and had defended her if necessary by a blockade against the meddlers, or even suppose that we had adopted a Palmerstonian gambit

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and had merely intimated to Italy and Germany that it was against British Imperial interests that they should busy themselves too much on the western confines of the Mediterranean?

Suppose that we had treated Article XIX seriously, and foreseeing—as all did foresee—the difficulties about Austria's future, about the Sudetenland, about Danzig and the Corridor, had set up League Commissions to find the *just* solutions for them all before Hitler had had his chance—all on the strength of Collective Security under the Covenant?

Because we did not do these things, all of which history will say could have been done—we fell back on the "Policy of Appeasement"—not appeasement through self-sacrifice by Britain (which the word applies) in the interests of world peace, but sacrifice of the "small and weak nations" for British peace—which was not after all achieved.

Collective Security and the Covenant-prescribed self-determination on the part of Austria as to what her future should be, giving France a different and surer basis for her security than that of keeping Germans to different sides of an unnatural frontier.

We let Hitler jump the frontier at his pleasure, ignoring Austria's wishes.

The Dictated Peace created the Sudetenland problem: its authors were morally bound to find its solution—not by force on either side but by investigation, understanding and conciliation—as a part of a new Central European policy. The Central European policy of the Peace Conference of Paris was to put the Czechs in sovereign possession of territory completely surrounded by mountains which Bismarck called "a fortress created by God Himself," with control over all Germans finding themselves within it, with a guarantee from the Collective Security of the Covenant (with Article XIX put to sleep) and with the additional guarantee of a French (and, later, a Russian) alliance. The Paris Conference considered it essential to European peace that this fortress, planted in Central Europe by God, should be maintained intact to connect France with Poland (and Russia) and cut Germany off from South-East Europe.

If Sudetenland Germans were to be free to join Germany, it was "essential" in its turn that, first, Sudetenland Germans should be asked by plebiscite (free from Nazi influence) whether or not they wished to go, and, secondly, to assure the Czechs of some other guarantee to replace God's breached fortress.

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We helped in the breach of the fortress by guaranteeing the invader from the resistance of the garrison, and then promised, but did not keep our promise, to defend the fortress's inner citadel from further aggression.

The problem of Danzig and the Corridor was universally admitted to be difficult to solve, but there were well-known lines on which it might with good will be solved.

We left it severely alone till Hitler got truculent through encouragement by his former victories, and we then gave Poland a guarantee against any interference—which we were powerless to implement.

Hence the war during which Hitler has followed his Rhineland, Austrian, Czechoslovakian and Polish victories by Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian and French victories and a siege of this other "fortress created by God Himself."

Having taken a lightning glance at the results of the Policy of Appeasement, let us try to look at that policy as if we did not know the results—say in 1937. In 1937 Sir Eric Phipps ceased to be British Ambassador at Berlin and Sir Nevile Henderson succeeded him, taking his instructions from Mr. Neville Chamberlain, just before he became Prime Minister in London. The later Ambassador thus summarises the views of the earlier:¹

In the years between 1933 and 1938 it was a common question to hear, "What does Hitler really want?" It had always been answered—and notably by my predecessor, Sir Eric Phipps, in his valedictory despatch of 1937—in the same sense: first Austria, then the Sudetenlands; and after that, the liquidation of Memel, the Corridor, and Danzig; and finally the lost colonies. From the beginning of my mission I had never found any reason to disagree with a judgment the accuracy of which I entirely endorsed.

Thus warned, what were Mr. Chamberlain's instructions to the new Ambassador? Sir Nevile does not tell us in so many words except that he was to "co-operate with the Nazi Government." Asked if it would be quite right for him to be "slightly indiscreet" in the way of exhibitions of friendliness, Mr. Chamberlain replied "that a calculated indiscretion was sometimes a very useful form of diplomacy and that he had himself recently had experience of its value." I have already recalled the indiscretion of Mr. Chamberlain here indicated (about "the very midsummer madness" of applying sanctions to

¹ *Failure of a Mission*, p. 129.

The British Policy of "Appeasement"

Mussolini) and Sir Nevile promptly reveals his. At a dinner of the German English Society he said:²

"Guarantee us peace and peaceful evolution in Europe, and Germany will find that she has no more sincere and, I believe, more useful friend in the world than Great Britain." That was in fact the whole basis of my policy.

I do not think any unbiased reader of Sir Nevile Henderson's naïve Apologia would think it unfair to summarise the policy thus forecast as one of agreeing that Germany had grievances which we would not obstruct her in remedying on her own terms so long as she did not use force in the remedying. The difference between the Czechoslovakian and the Polish crisis was that, though in both cases we said that we should have to support France in any opposition to the maltreatment of her Allies, we told Czechoslovakia that she must accept Hitler's terms, however often he revised them to her hurt, but told Poland that she need accept no terms which she thought derogatory.

In neither case did we examine the matters in dispute independently of the attitude of the contestants,³ i.e. we at no time attempted the role of arbiter—still less call in the League machinery which only our own actions made unavailable, so far as it *was* unavailable; i.e. again, we confessedly and blatantly decided every issue according to the presence or absence of "vital interests" of our own, apart from any other vital interests—even, apparently, what we thought in 1920 were vital interests of the family of nations.

And be it noted that the pivotal matter of Munich, judged at the moment by its success in avoiding war in September 1938, must be judged by history by its effect on the gathering cloud of European war. Pacifists have the right to say that we should never have gone to war: "Munichites" must say why it was right to go to war over Poland and wrong to go to war in defence of Czechoslovakia, and whether not going to war over Czechoslovakia made war less or more likely over Poland. Munich must be judged in the light, first of the subsequent "Rape of Prague," and, secondly, of the attack on Poland. Both were on the political map clearly to be seen by all but the wilfully blind in September 1938—and long before.

Sir Nevile Henderson's "mission" was based on the determined

² The same, p. 23.

³ Lord Runciman's recommendations were based not merely on justice but on his views of what might placate people acting under Hitler's instructions.

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disregard of the symptoms. He deliberately set out to be pleasant and to paint a fancy picture of Nazi policy at home and abroad flagrantly inconsistent with all the wide knowledge on the subject even at the time.

That is not the way a permanent policy of peace can be constructed and its author is not entitled to pose as an architect of peace. He is the architect, accepting foundations planned by other architects whose drawings he initialled at every stage, of inevitable chaos and disaster.

Let us examine the architecture, story by story, of this super-structure.

CHAPTER XVII

Austria

(a) Isolated

When, after his feelers for an honourable peace failed both with the Allies and with his brother Emperor in Berlin, the Emperor Charles saw his Dual Monarchy disintegrating before his eyes, he issued the Manifesto of October 16, 1919, foreshadowing the conversion of Austria into a Federal State, in which each race was to form a political commonwealth of its own upon its own territory. Five days after its publication all the German members of the Lower House of the Austrian Parliament assembled in Vienna and determined to declare the German-Austrian portion of the Austrian territories, formerly under Habsburg rule, an independent State and to constitute themselves the Provisional National Government, and on October 30th this Provisional National Assembly assumed the supreme independent authority in those Austrian territories claimed by it to be predominantly German.

But on the very day of the Armistice, Charles, unprompted, renounced all participation in the government in order, as he expressed it, "not to hinder the free development of my people." This enabled him to avoid abdicating, though by March 1919 he found it advisable to leave his castle of Eckartsau for Switzerland. Meanwhile, in the general military breakdown of the Central Powers, a revolutionary movement broke out in Vienna, and on November 12, 1918, a declaration took place of an independent German-Austrian Republic in accordance with the right of self-determination, and expressly repudiating any legal descent from the broken-up Empire. The Czechoslovak Republic had already come into being on October 28th.

On November 22nd the National Assembly proceeded to define its territory as strictly as might be on an ethnographical basis. Bohemia and Moravia being a part of the defunct Austrian Empire, the Assembly responded to the wish of the German inhabitants of Bohemia themselves to have included large tracts of those provinces, and while the German-Austrian Republic thus strove to annex the Germans of Bohemia (the Sudeten Germans of 1938), it also strove to annex itself

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to the German Reich. Article I of the law of November 12th proclaimed that "German-Austria is a democratic Republic," and Article II proclaimed that "German-Austria is a component part of the German Republic."

But then came the Treaty of St. Germain, drawing new frontiers over the head of the new Republic, which was compelled to drop the prefix "German" from its title and to renounce the prospect of affiliation to Germany and the inclusion of the territories already by then incorporated in the new Czechoslovak Republic. The boundaries to the south and west with Yugoslavia and Hungary were decided by plebiscite, transferring most of the Berganland from Hungary to Austria.

So the new arrangement of Central Europe opened with an avowed desire on the part of Austria for incorporation in the German Reich, and the powerful Social Democratic Party of Austria (and, of course, the "Pan-German" Party) long pressed for it. But, curiously, the Social Democrats of Germany itself became less keen on it as the months and years went by. They had struggled successfully at Weimar to centralise the Government at Berlin at the expense of the States which Bismarck had promoted from the North German Federation to make the German Empire. Bismarck had left the constituent States with large powers still and these the Republic greatly reduced, though only on the advent of Hitler was the centralisation to be made complete.

Bismarck, standing for an Empire under Prussian hegemony, had to fight and beat Austria and exclude her (with Bohemia) from the North German Federation, which he formed in 1866 as his preliminary step to the new Empire. To have admitted Austria with its august traditions to the German Republic in 1919 or later would have involved serious modifications of the Weimar constitution in the direction of the old "particularism" which the Social Democrats of Germany wished to overcome as much as did Bismarck, though for different reasons. But when Hitler finally abolished State Legislatures, as the Republic had ended the rule of their kings and princes, this difficulty was to disappear: under the Third Reich, if Austria were annexed, Austria would not be consulted on such matters. As we know, no Legislature or Head of State survived: Austrians entered the train of the Reichsführer or went into exile or into concentration camps and that was the end of the matter.

Dr. Gilbert Murray, writing in 1933, just after Hitler's accession to

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power, said that the "ironical thought suggests itself—that one of the results of self-determination applied" (in Central Europe) "to-day might be the secession of Bavaria and other South German States from the Nazi domination in order to form a separate *anschluss* with Austria."¹ The remark illustrates the shortsightedness of the action of the Allies at Versailles. To leave Austria free to join Germany and Germany free to absorb Austria would have been the very best way of putting a spoke in the wheel of Prussian domination in Germany. How much better would the aim of Versailles have been served if this seed of disintegration had been sown, making for a break-away of a Southern German Federation led by Bavaria and Austria, instead of isolating Austria and leaving Prussia at the head of the rest! The Allies did not foresee that an Austrian working man with the Prussian spirit would solve, in just the way he has solved, the rivalry of the Habsburg inheritor of the traditions of the Holy Roman Empire with the upstart Empire of the Hohenzollerns!

Instead, the Allies formed a separate Austria consisting of the capital of a former Empire with its occupation gone but with nearly two million inhabitants, a third of the whole population of the new Republic, and with a surrounding territory consisting of some of the poorest and most mountainous areas of the former Empire. Only about a third is under cultivation, another third is covered with forest and the remainder is largely mountainous, though well suited in parts to grazing and dairy farming. This makes another mistake of the Allies the more glaring, that of breaking up the economic whole of the Austro-Hungarian Empire inhabiting the Danube basin into a number of sovereign States free each to erect its separate trade barrier against each of the others. Memories of the Great War stood between Austria and Hungary on the one side and the remaining "succession States" on the other. In the lack of economic rapprochement with these, and burdened with a disproportionate share of "reparation" to raise, Austria was bound to seek incorporation with the still mighty conglomeration of the German Reich though the German Reich did not at first find it by any means an attractive morsel economically.

¹ In *The Intelligent Man*, p. 130.

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(b) Engulfed

Reviewing these matters, it is not to be wondered at that the new Republic had a very chequered political career. The League of Nations did one of its best pieces of work in nursing it through financial and economic collapses to comparative health. But it is not to be wondered at again that the Social Democratic Party—the pioneers of modern Vienna, to which social reformers all over the world looked for inspiration and example—found their own left wing too discontented to discipline, and the political centre of gravity shifted to the Christian (Roman Catholic) Socialists—agrarian and middle-class—and their leader, Mgr. Seipel. So there were riots in July 1927 over the acquittal of Nationalists alleged to have murdered Socialist speakers. The law courts were sacked and the town hall and many records burned (prompted or unprompted by malign influence from Moscow). In February 1934, by which time extremists on both sides were arming, a search for arms by the police led to a general strike, street fighting and ultimately to the execution of several Socialist leaders under Chancellor Dolfuss.

On August 7, 1933, the British and French representatives in Berlin “expressed the views of their Governments that recent instances of Nazi propaganda directed against the Austrian Government were inconsistent with treaty obligations and incompatible with the conditions of the Four-Power Pact.” To which the German Government replied that it “held this interference with the German-Austrian *impasse* as inadmissible.” Then at a patriotic rally in Vienna on September 11th, Dolfuss launched “a programme of national reconstruction based on the principles of authoritative leadership and the Christian corporate State.” The old Parliamentarism, he said, and the old party system, the old Liberalism and the old capitalism had all passed away, never to rise again. Fascists and Communists had long been arming and drilling and doubtless Dolfuss was voicing the weary exclamation of the man in the street—“a plague o’ both your houses.” On October 3rd Dolfuss was shot at in the Parliamentary buildings.

On February 17, 1934, a statement was issued in London that

The Austrian Government has inquired of the Governments of France, Great Britain and Italy, as to their attitude with regard to the *dossier* which it has prepared with a view to establishing German

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interference in the internal affairs of Austria and communicated to them. The conversations which have taken place between the three Governments on this subject have shown that they take a common view as to the necessity of maintaining Austria's independence and integrity in accordance with the relative treaties.

But on July 1934 Dr. Dolfuss was assassinated in a particularly atrocious manner by people for whom the German Minister in Vienna thought fit to intervene (before, it is true, it was known that Dolfuss had died of his wounds).

Under his successor, Dr. von Schuschnigg, two and a half years later, an agreement was concluded with Germany that, Germany recognising the "full sovereignty" of Austria, each Government promised not to interfere in the domestic politics of the other country and that Austrian policy, towards Germany in particular, would be guided by the principle that Austria recognised herself to be a German State. It was further announced that a Minister of German sympathies had joined the Austrian Cabinet.

The following February (1937) Baron von Neurath, the German Foreign Minister, visited Vienna amid cries of "Heil Hitler." In the official report of "his friendly interview" with the Austrian Chancellor it was agreed that a "cultural committee" should be appointed to discuss how cultural relations between Germany and Austria could be further deepened. But the Baron expressed the concern with which Germany contemplated the possibility of a Habsburg restoration. As to that, however, the Chancellor emphasised the view that that matter was one which concerned Austria alone.

Only a year later, on February 12, 1938, Herr Hitler ordered a visit at Berchtesgaden from Dr. Schuschnigg and there the Reichsführer peremptorily demanded that Nazi Ministers should be appointed to the Austrian Cabinet and that Dr. Seyss-Inquart, a strong Nazi supporter, should become Minister of the Interior and thus take over the control of the police. And so it was Dr. Seyss-Inquart was given the desired post, Dr. Guido Schmidt was promoted to be Foreign Minister and an amnesty was granted to all Nazi prisoners. The first act of Dr. Seyss-Inquart, after his appointment, was to visit Hitler, in his turn, at Berlin. But Dr. Schuschnigg told the Federal Diet that Germany "had repeated the assurance that she would take the essential measures to insure non-intervention in Austrian domestic affairs."

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Yet the end soon came. Dr. Schuschnigg was indiscreet enough on March 9th to announce that a plebiscite would be held the following Sunday in which the nation would be asked to vote for or against his Government's programme. The German Government first demanded the postponement of the plebiscite. When this demand had been agreed to a second was made, with a time limit of a few hours and backed by the threat of force. This required the Austrian President to replace Dr. Schuschnigg by Dr. Seyss-Inquart, and to appoint a Government with a Nazi majority.

In a broadcast farewell to the nation Dr. Schuschnigg said that in order to avert bloodshed the Government was yielding to force. "I declare before the world," he said, "that the reports that were spread in Austria that there had been a labour dispute, that streams of blood were flowing, that the Government were not masters of the situation and could not keep order were inventions from A to Z." Dr. Schuschnigg was thereupon ordered into confinement in Belvedere Castle, in Vienna.

On March 12th German troops occupied strategic points in Austria and the same day Hitler crossed the frontier to visit his birthplace near Linz. There he declared in a speech that he had fulfilled his mission to "bring my home country back to the great German Reich." A letter from Hitler to Mussolini assured him that Germany intended to respect Italy's frontier with Austria and, therefore, to abandon all claim to the German-speaking part of South Tyrol, and the Czechoslovak Government was, of course, informed that Germany had no hostile feelings towards Czechoslovakia. (That was six months before Munich.)

On March 13th the new Austrian Government passed a law declaring that Austria had become a German State and announced a new plebiscite to be held on April 10th to enable all Germans over twenty on both sides of the abolished frontier to vote on the reunion. The resignation of President Miklas was announced. On March 14th Hitler visited Vienna and Mr. Chamberlain read in the House of Commons the German Government's reply to the British protest, in which von Neurath stated that "the British Government is not within its rights in claiming the role of a protector of the independence of Austria." On March 21st Germany sent a note to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations declaring that since Austria had ceased to exist as an independent State she must no longer be considered a member of

Austria: (b) Engulfed

the League and on March 26th tariff barriers between Germany and Austria were removed.

That is all, except that Sir John Simon secured a new Anglo-German Payments Agreement that

The German Government will reimburse the United Kingdom Government any sums paid in respect of their guarantees of the Austrian Government Loans and assure the full service of bonds of these loans owned by British holders on July 1, 1938.

That, of course, was unexpectedly satisfactory—to speculative British bond-holders.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Czechs

Enlightened opinion in this country saw clearly how great was the damage to the theory and practice of Collective Security inflicted by the League's failure to stay the aggressor in Manchuria, in Ethiopia and in Spain. But at the time, at any rate, the issue did not seem so clear in regard to the Nazi occupation of the Rhineland and of Austria. As to the Allied Governments, they seemed much more upset by the military re-occupation by the Germans of their own territory on the Rhine than at the seizure of Austria, which was *not* theirs. Both actions were in flagrant breach of the Peace Treaties, but for years these clauses of the Peace Treaties had seemed here to be as flagrantly unjust.

A military occupation of the Rhineland and even the exaction of reasonable restitution in money and in kind seemed fair enough measures to have taken after so stupendous an act of aggression as the German invasion and destruction along her west front. But the permanent exclusion of the German Army and the permanent embargo on defensive fortifications of the whole Rhineland, marching with the frontier of "an hereditary enemy," did *not* seem fair; and it seemed not only unfair but obviously impossible permanently to maintain as the defeated opponent recovered strength and poise. So French indignation and dismay at this particular "defiance" were without their equivalents in Britain. A demilitarised strip of territory extending an equal distance from *both* sides of the common frontier, which Germany, sincerely or insincerely, offered as a substitute¹ would have been more defensible, or the international occupation of such zones. Indeed, as a mutually acceptable expedient either would surely have been unexceptionable with much to be said for it. The suggestion was made in March 1936, but neither idea was pursued. It was too late.

And so with the veto on the incorporation of Austria in the German Reich—of the surviving representative of the medieval German Empire in which Austria had played so great a part—this seemed equally arbitrary and equally shortsighted and difficult to defend and maintain. It was long understood, of course, that Austria wanted to join her

¹ See p. 75.

The Czechs

fellow Germans, as her fellow Germans believed she ought to be allowed to do. Even on the advent of Nazism to control in Berlin no sure assumption was possible that Austrians would be sufficiently repelled by it to reverse their attitude. In 1935, two years after Hitler's accession, the Saar voted itself back into the Reich by an overwhelming majority—to the mortification of many people in France—and theoretically, at any rate, Austria might do the same.

Moreover, in 1933, Dolfuss had inaugurated a regime of "authoritative leadership and the Christian Incorporate State" from which "Parliamentarianism, party politics, Liberalism and capitalism" were all condemned as equally out of date. How were Britons to know whether Austrians did or did not prefer Dolfussism to Hitlerism? Both seemed to British Liberals equally atrocious, despite the insertion of the word "Christian" in the one title. Both Dolfuss's successor, Schuschnigg, and Hitler successively announced plebiscites on their respective policies and plans for Austria. The first was forbidden and the second was not convincing (no plebiscites of Hitler ever are!). What we were sure of was that neither Austria's isolation nor her engulfment could have been allowed under a League of Nations, self-determination, Collective Security, regime without a plebiscite, instituted not by this or that Authoritarian "Leader," but by a neutral commission as it was in the Saar and in Upper Silesia. Even after the event, when Austrians of 100 per cent German blood were flying from Nazism or being interned as critics in concentration camps, no one could tell the proportion of the protestants to the total German Austrian population, and now we never shall know—till after the fall of Nazism.

But the next engulfment was a very different matter. There might be doubt as to the just way of dealing with Sudeten Germans, but the Czechs from the Austrian Empire and the Slovaks from the Hungarian Kingdom could not possibly be supposed to wish to join the Third Reich nor to benefit from such an event.

Mr. Wickham Steed, twelve months before Munich, expressed the enlightened Englishman's feelings in contemplating Czechoslovakia as the possible next victim of Hitlerism.²

Czechoslovakia is an outpost of Democracy in Europe not through any accident, but as an historical consequence of the revolution of John Huss—a purer thing than the revolution of Martin Luther. We

² At the Liberal Summer School, September 1937.

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in England need to know what forces in Europe are on the side of those principles upon which is founded our freedom and the whole constitution of the British Commonwealth. When you begin to betray fundamental principles out of real or imaginary prudence or self-interest, you may find yourself on an extremely slippery slope. We must, therefore, ask what Czechoslovakia means to us. . . .

I would have us to be true to principle. Inject into principle a few tiny drops of self-interest, and principle becomes absolute. Upon us depends the saving of Europe from unutterable woe, and the world is looking to us for some sign of apprehension that we hold its fate in our hands. Let there be a firm word from London that if any aggressive Power in Europe touches any country that holds our views we cannot be indifferent. . . . The people of this country can be united in ready acceptance of sacrifice for a clearly-defined ideal which they feel in their bones to be true. That ideal is nowhere more truly represented to-day than in Czechoslovakia.

Dr. Hubert Ripka, a prominent Czech politician and journalist, says:³

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, it was the Hussite revolution which, to a large extent, decided the course of events in Europe, and which started the great movement for emancipation which saw its zenith in the French Revolution. When, in 1526, the Habsburgs were elected Kings of Bohemia, they gained a position exceedingly favourable to the progressive development of their kingdom, which lasted more than four centuries, and secured right up to the beginning of the nineteenth century German predominance in Central Europe. The defeat of the Czechs at the Battle of the White Mountains in 1620 precipitated Europe in a war which lasted for more than thirty years and which finally assured the supremacy of the Habsburgs in Europe. The situation which the Battle of the White Mountain brought about in Europe resembled to a quite extraordinary degree the present European constellation [after Munich and the Rape of Prague].

Professor Masaryk, whose apostolic travels among the Allies during the Great War secured the emergence to nationhood of the Czech people and who became the first President of the Czechoslovak Republic, tells us of his country⁴ that it is "a new creation in respect of its name and State form only" but that

Some of its constituent territories, notably Bohemia and the lands of the Bohemian Crown (Moravia, Silesia, Lusatia), enjoyed, up to the

³ In *Munich: Before and After*, translated by Ida Šimdelková and Commander Edgar P. Young (Gollancz), p. 442.

⁴ In the article "Czechoslovakia," he contributed to the first of the supplementary volumes which constitute the Twelfth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, p. 785.

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year 1620, many centuries of independent existence and played an important, sometimes a predominating, part in the political and religious history of Central Europe. . . . Of the non-Czechoslovak races in the Republic the Germans are the most numerous. Their presence is largely the result, firstly of a colonisation which was favoured by the Bohemian kings and princes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and secondly of a policy of Germanisation pursued by the Habsburg rulers from the date of the battle of the White Mountain of 1620 (when the Czechs lost their independence) up till the very close of the World War.

But another Professor, Dr. Carl Brockhausen, of Vienna, quotes⁵ from the monumental work produced at Prague during the war, *Die Bohemische Nation*, showing that

The influence of German culture is remembered with gratitude. Of Palacky, the father of the nation, it says: "It was under the influence of German culture that Palacky was able to give a firm foundation to this conscious Bohemian ideal of his." . . . Besides mentioning the encouragement bestowed by leading Germans like Goethe, Herder, Raumer, etc., on Czech poets and scholars, the book gives an appreciative account of the Emperor Joseph. The article by Jakubec on "the literary renaissance," says: "The Prague theatre, which had vegetated miserably up to now, developed under the reign of Joseph II into a powerful instrument of culture."

But *these* Germans were not those who had settled in the Sudetes of Bohemia.

In Professor Kadner's article we read: "A new organisation was first created by the famous May education laws of 1869. It was the liberal-minded Germans who were instrumental in the first place in getting them passed while the Slavs from the beginning took up—to their own disadvantage—a hostile or at least passive attitude towards the establishment of these laws."⁶

Like Mr. Wickham Steed, President Masaryk believes that

The religious history of the lands which now compose the Czechoslovak Republic has a special interest for the English-speaking world owing to the fact that the work of John Huss, the great Czech reformer (1369-1415), was largely a result of the influence of Wyclif. At the beginning of the seventeenth century some 90 per cent of the Bohemians were Protestants, but the loss of independence and the effects of

⁵ In his article on the Austrian Empire in the same volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, p. 313.

⁶ The same, p. 314.

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religious persecution (the Counter-Reformation) under the aegis of the Habsburg dynasty, caused the position to be reversed, and up to 1918 almost 90 per cent of the Czechoslovak population was entered in the official statistics as belonging to the Roman Catholic Church.

Between 1918 and 1921 about one million persons left the Roman Church, the most conspicuous secession being that which resulted in the formation of a national "Czechoslovak Church." A considerable section of the priesthood demanded some democratic reforms, including the abolition of celibacy, the introduction of the vernacular into the Church services, and a more democratic administration of Church affairs. On the Holy See declining to meet these demands the "Czechoslovak Church" was founded in January 1920.⁷

The Protestants number about one million, the largest body being the Evangelical Church in Slovakia with a membership of four hundred thousand. In Bohemia the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren represents a spiritual and historical continuity with the old Hussites. It was constituted in 1918 by the fusion of two existing Protestant bodies, the Reformed (Calvinistic) Church and the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church.⁸

⁷ This Church is a corporate constituent member of the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, which is represented in Britain by the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (of which I have the honour to be a Past President).

⁸ The same *E.B.* volume, p. 791.

CHAPTER XIX

The Sudeten Germans

We return to the Sudeten Germans. President Masaryk recalls that

On the day following the attainment of Czechoslovak independence, October 29, 1918, the Germans of Bohemia and Moravia—the so-called Sudetenland Germans—declared the districts where they predominated a province of the new Austrian State, which had been constituted some eight days previously. It was not until the Treaty of St. Germain was concluded on September 10, 1919, and the Austrian Government released the Germans from their oath of allegiance they had taken to the new Austrian Republic, that the Germans desisted from openly fighting against incorporation in the Czechoslovak Republic. Their claim to self-determination was rejected by the Peace Conference. From the mere presence of the Germans within the historic frontiers of the Czechoslovak State it would indeed have been difficult, with justice, to deduce a right of self-determination, that is to say, the right, in this case, of retaining the fruits of misused power.

President Masaryk was proud of the way the Czechs handled their minority problem:

Special provision is made in the Constitutional Charter of this Republic (in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of St. Germain) for the protection of national, religious and racial minorities. Difference in religious belief, confession or language, constitute no obstacle to any citizen in regard to entry into the public services or offices, to the attainment to any promotion or dignity, or to the exercise of any trade or calling. In towns and districts in which there lives a considerable section (20 per cent or more) of citizens speaking a language other than Czechoslovak, schools are to be provided, the instruction to be imparted in the language of that minority. Such a minority has also a right to a proportionate amount of the funds set aside by the State or the local authority for purposes of education, religion or philanthropy. The Courts of Justice and the public offices are also required to pay due regard in respect of languages to the desires of a minority which numbers at least 20 per cent of the inhabitants of the locality. Every act tending to force a citizen to abandon his nationality—in other words oppression of a citizen on account of his race—is expressly prohibited.¹

¹ The same article in the *E.B.*, p. 783.

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Dr. Gilbert Murray has testified² that

Up to a short time ago Czechoslovakia was acknowledged to be both the most successful and the best governed and conducted of the States created or emancipated by the Great War. . . . During the four years in which I was intimately concerned in the protection of Minorities by the Council of the League I have no hesitation in saying that the Minorities in Czechoslovakia were the best treated in Europe, and that I never found Mr. Beneš other than fair-minded and ready to help.

But Dr. Murray sorrowfully went on to say that

The situation seems to have deteriorated of late years, owing partly to economic distress, intensified by the German exclusion of Czech goods, and partly to the fear inspired in the ordinary population by the aggressive policy of the Nazi Government.

Dr. Ripka admits:³

One may justly reproach Czechoslovak politicians and journalists for having paid too little heed to the constant reproaches and reminders of Presidents Masaryk and Beneš. Both men constantly spoke of the necessity for finding a completely satisfactory settlement of the nationalities question; their colleagues were to blame that they did not educate and prepare the public in time for this settlement. . . . From the very earliest post-war days I have repeatedly criticised, in the spirit of Masaryk's policy, the short-comings and errors of our treatment of the minorities.

Yet the fact remains that there was no nation in Europe which treated its minorities more justly and more liberally than we did. Switzerland has no minorities, being composed of three equal nationalities; Belgium is similarly composed of two equal nationalities. Whereas in Germany, Poland and Italy, or in any of the States which lie between us and the Ægean, the minorities are literally oppressed and are struggling against great difficulties to obtain the primitive right to their own language and culture, in Czechoslovakia—and I must underline the fact that it was only in Czechoslovakia—the minorities enjoyed not only the right to their own language and culture, but also full civic and political rights.

The struggle of the Sudeten Germans was not for their nationality rights, but for political supremacy. For this reason it was not to be wondered at that Czechoslovak public opinion showed little enthusiasm in making concessions whereby the political position of the Sudeten Germans was gradually strengthened. It should not be forgotten that

² In a letter to *The Times* of May 18, 1938.

³ In *Munich: Before and After*, p. 36.

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the Sudeten Germans themselves greeted each concession with fiercer and more insolent attacks on the State.

Dr. Gilbert Murray (in the letter quoted above) insisted that

A sharp distinction should be made between (a) the honest relief of the Sudetendeutsch grievances, advocated by Jaksch, the German Social Democrat leader, and (b) the Nazification of the Sudeten territory, largely by means of terrorism, which, whatever Henlein's own wishes may be [Henlein was the Nazi leader in Sudetenland], seems to be the object of the German Government. The first is both desirable in itself and compatible with the continued existence of Czechoslovakia: the second is neither.

Lord Runciman's Report, as we shall see, obliterated any distinction between the two, and under his inspiration Mr. Chamberlain (thankful, no doubt, for what seemed an authoritative lead) joined Hitler himself in producing a situation which was to be shown, by demonstration, to be incompatible—given Herr Hitler as a neighbour—with “the continued existence of Czechoslovakia.”

I cannot deny myself the reproduction of Dr. Murray's prophecy as to what would happen “if Czechoslovakia is Nazified”:

We shall be on the verge of a time when, in all Europe east of the Rhine, no Jew, no Pacifist, no Socialist, no liberally-minded man, and we may without exaggeration add, no Christian, will be able to live in peace and security.

Dr. Murray's only mistake in his prophecy was to limit its scope by the Rhine. We are now fighting desperately to release these people: then it was still possible to save them.

But there was a passage in Lord Runciman's Report, amidst a scathing rebuke of the Sudeten German leaders' methods, that it is fair to quote now in juxtaposition to Dr. Murray's strictures. It was, of course, written from Prague on September 21, 1938, when we were on the brink of the Munich crisis:

I have much sympathy, however, with the Sudeten case. It is a hard thing to be ruled by an alien race; and I have been left with the impression that Czechoslovak rule in the Sudeten areas for the last twenty years, though not actively oppressive and certainly not “terroristic,” has been marked by tactlessness, lack of understanding, petty intolerance and discrimination, to the point where the resentment of the German population was inevitably moving in the direction of revolt.

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As to that, one cannot help wondering whether Lord Runciman made insufficient allowance for the exacerbation produced on both sides by the long wrangling promoted and stimulated from Berlin over grievances so eagerly searched for for political purposes as a basis for the next step in the Policy of Defiance. No one could be more severe than Lord Runciman himself on the methods adopted in the prosecution of this campaign. Before the advent of Hitler it used to be said of the Czech Republic that the chief grievance of the minorities there was that so few grievances could be found to be aired.

However that may be, after a thorough preparation by a barrage of the whole German Press, on April 24th (1938), at Carlsbad, Herr Konrad Henlein, leader of the Sudeten German Minority in Czechoslovakia, demanded a complete revision of Czech foreign policy and "the legal order of the State," this to be "reconstructed" on the following lines:

1. Full equality of status between Czechs and Germans.
2. Guarantee of equality by recognition of the Sudeten Germans as a legal personality.
3. Determination and legal recognition of the German regions within the State.
4. Full self-government for these German regions.
5. Legal protection for every citizen living outside the regime of his own nationality.
6. Removal of injustices inflicted on us since 1918. Reparation of the damage caused thereby.
7. Recognition and realisation of the principle "German regions and German officials."
8. Full liberty to profess German nationality and German political philosophy.

This was the challenge President Beneš (who became head of the State on the abdication of Dr. Masaryk in December 1935⁴) had to meet. Just ten days earlier he said in a speech,

The forces of peace in all European States without exception are far stronger than it would seem. It is for this reason that I still refuse to consider an armed conflict inevitable and cannot reconcile myself to the thought that Europe must go to war. It is our sacred duty to be prepared for it, but at the same time to do everything in our power to avoid the outbreak of such a conflict. . . . The Czechoslovaks and the Germans in Czechoslovakia are mature factors in European culture. Theirs is the duty and theirs should be the ambition to set the rest of

⁴ Dr. Masaryk died two years later.

The Sudeten Germans

Europe a good example and show how nationality difficulties should be solved. I am convinced that they will be able to find a just and rational solution.

On the Carlsbad programme Sir Nevile Henderson says:⁵

Most of the Carlsbad programme might have been granted at once, and the two or three debatable points in it discussed in a better atmosphere at leisure. Only one solution had any real prospect of success, and that was by the conversion of Czechoslovakia from a national State, governed solely by the Czechs, into a State of nationalities where all, and especially the Sudeten, as the biggest minority, had equal and autonomous rights. . . .

But Dr. Beneš undoubtedly felt that such a new creation could not long survive as an entity; and rather than submit to it, he resolved to shelter himself behind the optimistic belief that, in the last resort, France, England and Russia would save him from the necessity of what he regarded as excessive and dangerous concessions to the German minority.

Dr. Ripka directly and convincingly contradicts the suggestion of Dr. Beneš's backwardness:⁶

I feel it absolutely necessary to contradict most strongly the campaign which misrepresents President Beneš as having been the main obstacle to an agreement with the Sudeten German Party. When I visited London and Paris last July [1938], I heard it said on many occasions that our Prime Minister, Dr. Hodža, was in favour of a quick agreement, but that President Beneš was preventing it. In actual fact, however, nothing could be further from the truth. It is possible that on certain specific occasions Dr. Beneš and Dr. Hodža, men very different in temperament, may have adopted different tactics, but they were both agreed that it was essential—absolutely essential—to solve the nationality problem as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

⁵ *Failure of a Mission*, pp. 131, 132.

⁶ The same, pp. 23, 24.

CHAPTER XX

The Runciman Report

Then came the incident of May 21st (1938), when our Government warned Hitler of the unwisdom of a rumoured mobilisation that, in fact, never took place and the rejoicings in Prague on the supposition that the denials of mobilisation marked a diplomatic defeat for Hitler. (There was also the other rumour that Sir Nevile Henderson was evacuating the whole of the British colony, equally unfounded.) Sir Nevile says:¹

The publicity of the impressive official warning given, as eventually proved, without due cause in Berlin was unfortunate enough. The defiant gesture of the Czechs in mobilising some 170,000 troops, and then proclaiming to the world that it was their action which had turned Hitler from his purpose, was equally regrettable. But what Hitler could not stomach was the exultation of the Press. The protagonists of Collective Security proclaimed the victory of their system. Every newspaper in Europe and America joined in the chorus. "No" had been said, and Hitler had been forced to yield. The democratic Powers had brought the totalitarian States to heel, etc., etc. It was, above all, this jubilation which gave Hitler the worst brainstorm of the year, and pushed him definitely over the border-line from peaceful negotiation to the use of force.

All this throws a curious light on our next extract from Dr. Ripka:²

I myself consider, and many other Czech politicians have thought the same, that immediately after May 21st, at the moment when our partial mobilisation and the firm decision of Britain and France had forced Hitler to retreat and when his prestige was considerably diminished even among the Sudeten Germans themselves, we should have proposed a broad-minded solution of our nationality problem. This solution should have been carried through quickly—by the end of July at the latest. It should have been carried through preferably in agreement with the Sudeten German Party, but otherwise without it, and in any case, of course, in agreement with the loyal, democratic Sudeten Germans. It was undoubtedly a great mistake that we did not do this, for we gave the Nazis time to recover themselves and to become even more intransigent. By failing to take a firm and con-

¹ *Failure of a Mission*, pp. 139, 140.

² *Munich*, p. 23.

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structive line, we gave many people in the West, even those well-disposed towards us, the impression that we did not take seriously the settlement of our nationality problem.

It was not till July 28th that the next major step was taken. Mr. Chamberlain announced in the House of Commons that, "at the request of the Czech Government," Lord Runciman was to visit Czechoslovakia in an unofficial capacity as investigator and mediator. Whereupon Sir Archibald Sinclair, the leader of the Liberals in the House, put to the Prime Minister the rumour that the British Government was "pressing the Czech Government to submit their proposals to Herr Henlein for his approval before submitting them to the Czech Parliament."

Is that true; and if true, is it wise to give Herr Henlein a form of veto on proposals before they ever reach the Czech Parliament? Surely it would be better that the proposals should be expounded to Parliament, and that if Herr Henlein has criticisms to make of those proposals he should have to argue them in Parliament and within the hearing of the public opinion of the whole world.

Mr. Mander, too, at the same sitting,

thought that in regard to Czechoslovakia Herr Hitler's game was to protest strongly at every concession that it was not enough, and that he must have more, until the time comes when he would have everything he wanted. Having made all the concessions they possibly could to the extreme limit, having regard to the safety of the State, the Czechoslovak Government should then say publicly to the world that they had done so, that they could go no further, and that they were prepared to stand, alone, if necessary, against any attack from an aggressor. He believed that an attitude of that kind would rally round Czechoslovakia those forces which stand for law and order in the world.

On September 6th President Beneš handed to the Sudeten leaders the Government's new proposals—the so-called Fourth Plan. The basic points were:

Cantonal self-government, proportionality in public service, German officials in German areas, complete equality of languages, and economic and financial help for the districts most affected.

And then, on September 7th, it was officially stated in London that a suggestion, in *The Times* leading article that day, that the Czech Government might consider the possibility of a secession of the fringe

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of alien population in these territories, in no way represented the views of the Government.³

On September 21st Lord Runciman gave his opinion to Mr. Chamberlain not only of the proposals of September 6th but of the tactics of the Sudeten Germans and their leader:

In my opinion—and, I believe, in the opinion of the more responsible Sudeten leaders—this plan embodies almost all the requirements of the Karlsbad Eight Points, and with a little clarification and extension would have been made to cover them in their entirety. Negotiations should at once have been resumed on this favourable and hopeful basis; but little doubt remains in my mind that the very fact that they were so favourable operated against their chances with the more extreme members of the Sudeten German Party.

It is my belief that the incident arising out of the visit of certain Sudeten German Deputies to investigate into the case of persons arrested for arms smuggling at Mährisch-Ostrau was used in order to provide an excuse for the suspension, if not for the breaking off, of negotiations. The Czech Government, however, at once gave way to the demands of the Sudeten German Party in this matter, and preliminary discussions of the "Fourth Plan" were resumed on September 10th. Again, I am convinced that this did not suit the policy of the Sudeten extremists, and that incidents were provoked and instigated on September 11th, and with greater effect after Herr Hitler's speech, on September 12th. As a result of the bloodshed and disturbance thus caused, the Sudeten delegates refused to meet the Czech authorities as had been arranged on September 13th. Herr Henlein and Herr Frank presented a new series of demands—withdrawal of State police, limitation of troops to their military duties, etc., which the Czechoslovak Government were again prepared to accept on the sole condition that a representative of the party came to Prague to discuss how order should be maintained. On the night of September 13th this condition was refused by Herr Henlein and all negotiations were completely broken off.

But then, later in the Report, these two fatal paragraphs follow:

It has become self-evident to me that these frontier districts between Czechoslovakia and Germany where the Sudeten population is in an important majority should be given full right of self-determination

³ Here is a footnote from Dr. Ripka which is to the point on this suggestion in *The Times*: "One cannot overstress the fact that the demand for union with the Reich was no spontaneous expression of the desire of the majority of the Sudeten German people. This demand was imposed upon the Sudeten Germans by a minority of Pan-German extremists among them, who were working in close collaboration with and following the instructions of Hitler's political General Staff" (*The same*, p. 20).

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at once. If some cessation is inevitable, as I believe it to be, it is as well that it should be done promptly and without procrastination. There is real danger of civil war, in the continuance of a state of uncertainty. Consequently there are very real reasons for a policy of immediate and drastic action. Any kind of plebiscite or referendum would, I believe, be a sheer formality in respect of these predominantly German areas. A very large majority of their inhabitants desire amalgamation with Germany. The inevitable delay involved in taking a plebiscite would only serve to excite popular feelings, with perhaps most dangerous results. I consider therefore that these frontier districts should at once be transferred from Czechoslovakia to Germany, and further, that measures for their peaceful transfer, including the provision of safeguards for the population during the transfer period, should be arranged forthwith between the two Governments.

The transfer of these frontier districts does not, however, dispose finally of the question of how Germans and Czechs are to live together peacefully in future. Even if all the areas where Germans have a majority were to be transferred to Germany there would still remain in Czechoslovakia a large number of Germans, and in the areas transferred to Germany there would still be a certain number of Czechs. Economic connections are so close that an absolute separation is not only undesirable but inconceivable; and I repeat my conviction that history has proved that in times of peace the two peoples can live together on friendly terms. I believe that it is in the interests of all Czechs and of all Germans alike that these friendly relations should be encouraged to re-establish themselves; and I am convinced that this is the real desire of the average Czech and German. They are alike in being honest, hard-working and frugal folk. When political friction has been removed on both sides, I believe they can settle down quietly.

CHAPTER XXI

Munich

We have seen that as long as twelve months before "Munich" a trained observer such as Mr. Wickham Steed was foretelling an attack on Czechoslovakia and asking whether she was to be left in the lurch or whether she could rely on Collective Security if she was compelled to resist. On this issue the speech of the British Prime Minister of six months later¹ needs careful study. This speech began with a passage about the League of Nations which, said Mr. Chamberlain,

if only we could make it wide enough and strong enough to fulfil the functions for which it was originally designed, might yet become the surest and most effective guarantee for peace that the world has yet designed.

Going on to argue that British re-armament is essential as

a corollary both of the failure of the League for the moment to provide us with Collective Security, and also of the conditions which could alone make any form of Collective Security effective as a deterrent.

(We have tried to trace the real cause of that failure.) After a reference to the annexing of Austria (only twelve days before) the Prime Minister continued:

I think it is right that I should remind the House what are our existing commitments that might lead to the use of our arms for purposes other than our own defence, and the defence of territories of other parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Then he mentioned the Pact of Locarno and obligations to Portugal, Iraq and Egypt and *then*—the Covenant under which

our armaments may be used in bringing help to a victim of aggression in any case in which in our judgment it would be proper under the provision of the Covenant to do so.

But

in such an instance there is no automatic obligation to take military action. His Majesty's Government acknowledges that in present cir-

¹ In the House of Commons, March 24, 1938.

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cumstances the ability of the League to fulfil all the functions originally contemplated for it is reduced; but this is not to be interpreted as meaning that His Majesty's Government would in no circumstances intervene as a Member of the League for the restoration of peace or the maintenance of international order if circumstances were such as to make it appropriate for them to do so.

The question now arises [the Prime Minister continued] whether we should go further. Should we forthwith give an assurance to France that, in the event of her being called upon by reason of German aggression in Czechoslovakia to implement her obligations under the Franco-Czechoslovak Treaty, we would immediately employ our full military force on her behalf? Or, alternatively, should we at once declare our readiness to take military action in resistance to any forcible interference with the independence and integrity of Czechoslovakia, and invite any other nations which might so desire to associate themselves with us in such a declaration?

From a consideration of these two alternatives it clearly emerges that under either of them the decision as to whether or not this country should find itself involved in war would be automatically removed from the discretion of His Majesty's Government, and the suggested guarantee would apply irrespective of the circumstances by which it was brought into operation, and over which His Majesty's Government might not have been able to exercise any control.²

This position is not one that His Majesty's Government could see their way to accept in relation to an area where their vital interests are not concerned in the same degree as they are in the case of France and Belgium.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister reminded us, we *were* vitally interested in France and that fact might involve us by her side. Can one not picture Hitler, reading this speech, saying to himself, "Well, I think I might risk it"?

It was reported, however, on May 23rd,³ that

The British Government has left Berlin in no doubt as to the seriousness with which it regards the situation. Herr von Ribbentrop has been assured in unmistakable terms by Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador, that if Czechoslovakia is attacked France will fulfil her obligations to that country. Sir Neville Henderson also made it quite clear that there can be no doubt as to the attitude of Great Britain. Herr von Ribbentrop was very indignant . . . [but] in the discussion that took place on Sunday between the German Ambassador and Lord Halifax it seemed that the German attitude had grown more reasonable.

² This argument in relation to the Covenant is fully discussed in Chapter XXV below.

³ By the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*.

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But the Prime Minister's pronouncement of March 24th had other repercussions in Europe. On July 25th *The Times* reported that

The signatory Powers of the Oslo Convention of 1930—Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg—declared at the conclusion of a two days' conference in Copenhagen that they no longer regarded the sanctions system as obligatory on any Member of the League and that they were determined never to take part in any conflict between the Great Powers. They declared their intention to continue to participate in the work of the League and to co-operate in all international efforts at reconciliation in an impartial and independent spirit.

President Beneš responded on July 29th with an appeal to the democratic countries to unite against the war-makers.

He emphasised that democratic countries far outnumbered Authoritarian States. As possible members of such a democratic front he enlisted the United States, Britain, France, Belgium, the Scandinavian countries, Soviet Russia and Czechoslovakia.

Lord Runciman arrived at Prague on August 2nd and on September 6th Dr. Beneš handed his Government's new proposals to the Sudeten party leaders, and those leaders rejected the offer on September 13th; and "with the breaking off of the negotiations by Herr Henlein," said Lord Runciman, "my functions as a mediator were at an end." Let the British Prime Minister take up the story:⁴

One of the principal difficulties in dealing with Totalitarian Governments is the lack of any means of establishing contact with the personalities in whose hands lie final decisions for the country. So I resolved to go to Germany myself to interview Herr Hitler and find out in personal conversation whether there was yet any hope of saving the peace.

So Mr. Chamberlain paid his first "flying visit" to Herr Hitler—at Berchtesgaden—on September 15th.

In courteous but perfectly definite terms, Herr Hitler made it plain that he had made up his mind that the Sudeten Germans must have the right of self-determination and of returning, if they wished, to the Reich. If they could not achieve this by their own efforts, he said, he would assist them to do so, and he declared categorically that rather than wait he would be prepared to risk a world war. . . . I have no doubt whatever now, looking back, that my visit alone prevented an invasion, for which everything was ready. It was clear to me that with

⁴ Speech in the House of Commons on September 28, 1938.

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the German troops in the positions they then occupied there was nothing that anybody could do that would prevent the invasion unless the right of self-determination were granted to the Sudeten Germans and that quickly.

But Prague saw things in a very different light. Prague did not join in the praise of Mr. Chamberlain for this just-in-time-intervention. "The news of Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Herr Hitler," says Dr. Ripka, caused the greatest anxiety and alarm:⁵

We realised at once, only too clearly, that such a gesture on the part of the Western Powers would encourage Hitler in his defiance, that he would interpret it as an indication of their weakness and become, therefore, more obstinate in his exaggerated demands and dangerous implacability. . . .

Mr. Chamberlain's decision to fly to Berchtesgaden was the explanation, in my opinion, of the sudden improvement in the situation for the Nazis which immediately ensued. We in Prague were at a loss to understand why it was that the further fulfilment of Germany's expansionist plans should thus be facilitated just at the moment when the complete collapse, within two or three days of its outbreak, of the Henleinist *Putsch*, which took place immediately after Herr Hitler's speech at Nuremberg on September 12th, had radically transformed the situation with regard to the so-called Sudeten-German problem.

Certainly the Henleinist *Putsch* was a fiasco from the Nazi point of view as a response to the big drum of Hitler's speech at Nuremberg. But the agreed programme proceeded as planned, and on the very day of Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Berchtesgaden, Herr Henlein broadcast a demand for the secession of German Sudeten territory. Dr. Beneš suspended the Sudeten party and Henlein fled to Germany, issuing three days later a call to arms on the Czechoslovak frontier. Mr. Chamberlain in London conferred with his colleagues, Lord Runciman and the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on the Berchtesgaden interview, and the Anglo-French proposals were sent to Hitler and to Beneš on September 19th as follows:

1. . . . We are both convinced that, after recent events, the point has now been reached where the further maintenance within the boundaries of the Czechoslovak State of the districts mainly inhabited by Sudeten Deutch cannot, in fact, continue any longer without imperilling the interests of Czechoslovakia herself and of European peace: In the light of these considerations both Governments have been compelled to the conclusion that the maintenance of peace and the safety of

⁵ *Munich*, pp. 17, 18.

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Czechoslovakia's vital interests cannot effectively be secured unless these areas are now transferred to the Reich.

2. This could be done either by direct transfer or as the result of a plebiscite. . . . We anticipate that you may prefer to deal with the Sudeten Deutch problem by the method of direct transfer, and as a case by itself.

3. The area for transfer would probably have to include areas with over 50 per cent of German inhabitants, but we should hope to arrange by negotiations provisions for adjustment of frontiers, where circumstances render it necessary, by some international body, including a Czech representative. We are satisfied that the transfer of smaller areas based on a higher percentage would not meet the case.

4. The international body referred to might also be charged with questions of possible exchange of population on the basis of right to opt within some specified time limit.

5. We recognise that, if the Czechoslovak Government is prepared to concur in the measures proposed, involving material changes in the conditions of the State, they are entitled to ask for some assurance of their future security.

6. Accordingly His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would be prepared, as a contribution to the pacification of Europe, to *join in an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression*. One of the principal conditions of such a guarantee would be the safeguarding of the independence of Czechoslovakia by the substitution of a general guarantee against unprovoked aggression in place of existing treaties which involve reciprocal obligations of a military character.

7. Both the French and British Governments recognise how great is the sacrifice thus required of the Czechoslovak Government in the cause of peace. But because that cause is common both to Europe in general and in particular to Czechoslovakia herself they have felt it their duty jointly to set forth frankly the conditions essential to secure it.

These proposals the Czech Government accepted on September 21st, but only "under irresistible pressure," and Mr. Chamberlain flew again to Germany and met Hitler, this time at Bad Godesberg. Meanwhile the Czech Government resigned and President Beneš ordered the full mobilisation of his army. During his wrestle with Hitler at Godesberg, Mr. Chamberlain exchanged notes with Hitler in which these passages occurred:

Chamberlain to Hitler:

I do not think you have realised the impossibility of my agreeing to put forward any plan unless I have reason to suppose that it will be considered by public opinion in my country, in France and, indeed, in the world generally, as carrying out the principles already agreed

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upon in an orderly fashion and free from the threat of force. I am sure that an attempt to occupy forthwith by German troops areas which will become part of the Reich at once in principle, and very shortly afterwards by formal delimitation, would be condemned as an unnecessary display of force. It being agreed in principle that the Sudeten areas are to join the Reich, the immediate question before us is how to maintain law and order pending the final settlement of the arrangements for the transfer.

Hitler to Chamberlain:

In my speech before the Reichstag of February 22nd, I declared that the German Reich would take the initiative in putting an end to any further oppression of these Germans. I have in a further declaration during the Reich Party Congress given clear and unmistakable expression to this decision. I recognise gratefully that at last, after twenty years, the British Government, represented by Your Excellency, has now decided for its part also to undertake steps to put an end to a situation which from day to day, and, indeed, from hour to hour, is becoming more unbearable. . . . I am, however, not prepared to allow a territory which must be considered as belonging to Germany, on the ground of the will of the people and of the recognition granted even by the Czechs, to be left without the protection of the Reich.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chamberlain consented to forward a memorandum of Herr Hitler's demands, thus criticised, to the Czech Government. On receiving this the Czech Government replied:

His Majesty's and the French Governments are very well aware that we agreed, under the most severe pressure, to the so-called Anglo-French Plan for ceding parts of Czechoslovakia. We accepted this plan under extreme duress. . . . We accepted it because we understood that it was the end of the demands to be made upon us, and because it followed from the Anglo-French pressure that these two Powers would accept responsibility for our reduced frontiers and would guarantee us their support in the event of our being feloniously attacked. . . .

Yesterday, after the return of Mr. Chamberlain from Godesberg, a new proposition was handed by His Majesty's Minister in Prague to my Government with the additional information that His Majesty's Government is acting solely as an intermediary and is neither advising nor pressing my Government in any way. . . . The proposals go far beyond what we agreed to in the so-called Anglo-French Plan. *They deprive us of every safeguard for our national existence.* . . .

My Government wish me to declare in all solemnity that Herr Hitler's demands in their present form are absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable to my Government. . . . We rely on the two

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great Western democracies, whose wishes we have followed much against our own judgment, to stand by us in our hour of trial.

Next day, however, the Czech Government agreed to go into conference without prejudice:

The Czechoslovak Government would be ready to take part in an international conference where Germany and Czechoslovakia, among other nations, will be represented to find a different method of settling the Sudeten German question from that expounded in Herr Hitler's proposals, keeping in mind the possible reverting to the so-called Anglo-French Plan.

(But Czechoslovakia was not present at the Munich meeting till an agreement between the Four Powers had been completed, and the sentence italicised above was truly prophetic!) For several days the negotiations were at an impasse and then Mr. Chamberlain proposed the Conference to be attended by Mussolini and Daladier in addition to Hitler and himself with representatives of Czechoslovakia. Herr Hitler sent out the invitations but ignored the suggestion as to Czech representatives, and Mr. Chamberlain ignored the omission (though the Czech representative waited in another room), and the Munich Conference was held on September 29th.

When Mr. Chamberlain flew back from Munich he claimed to have secured, ~~not only, like Disraeli,~~ "Peace with Honour," "but "Peace in Our Time." This was the document that he signed on our behalf and in regard to which he guaranteed the steps necessary for its fulfilment, irrespective of any opposition of the Government mainly concerned:

Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, taking into consideration the settlement already agreed upon in principle concerning the cession of the Sudeten German districts, have agreed on the following conditions and procedure and the measures to be taken and declare themselves individually held responsible by this agreement for guaranteeing the steps necessary for its fulfilment:

1. The evacuation begins on October 1st.
2. The United Kingdom of Great Britain, France and Italy agree that the evacuation of the region shall be completed by October 10th, without destruction of any of the existing installations, and that the Czechoslovak Government bear the responsibility for seeing that the evacuation is carried out without damaging the aforesaid installations.
3. The conditions governing the evacuation will be laid down in detail by an international commission composed of representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia.

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4. The occupation by stages of the predominantly German territories by German troops will begin on October 1st [with details as to dates].

5. The International Commission referred to in paragraph 3 will determine the territories in which a plebiscite is to be held. These territories will be occupied by international bodies until the plebiscites have been completed. The same Commission will fix the conditions in which the plebiscite is to be held, taking as a basis the conditions of the Saar plebiscite. . . .

6. The final determination of the frontiers will be carried out by the International Commission. The Commission will also recommend to the four Powers in certain exceptional circumstances minor modifications in the strictly ethnographical determination of the zones which are to be transferred without plebiscite.

7. There will be a right of option. . . .

8. The Czechoslovak Government will within the period of four weeks from the date of this agreement release from military and police forces any Sudeten Germans who may wish to be released, and the Czechoslovak Government will within the same period release Sudeten prisoners who are serving terms of imprisonment for political offences.

Annex to the Agreement: His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government have entered into the above agreement on the basis that they stand by the offer contained in Paragraph 6 of the Anglo-French proposals of September 19th in relation to an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression. When the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia has been settled Germany and Italy for their part will give a guarantee to Czechoslovakia. The heads of the Governments of the four Powers declare that the problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, if not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, shall form the subject of a further meeting of the heads of Government of the four Powers here present.

It will be recalled by all of us what a frenzied reception the Prime Minister had on arriving in Downing Street from Munich. War was averted, peace assured. But relief was hand in hand with humiliation. We had let down a very gallant nation, with the words "Collective Security" on our lips. Mr. Churchill (in the House of Commons on October 5th) fittingly summed up this Munich triumph of the British Prime Minister by saying

what everybody would like to ignore or forget but which must nevertheless be stated, namely, that we have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat and that France has suffered even more than we have. . . . The utmost my Right Honourable Friend, the Prime Minister, has been

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able to secure by all his immense exertions, by all the great efforts and mobilisation which took place in this country and by all the anguish and strain through which we have passed in this country, the utmost he has been able to gain for Czechoslovakia in the matters which were in dispute has been that the German Dictator, instead of snatching his victuals from the table, has been content to have them served to him course by course. . . . The difference between the positions reached at Berchtesgaden, at Godesberg and at Munich, can be very simply epitomised, to vary the metaphor: one pound was demanded at the pistol's point. When it was given, two pounds were demanded at the pistol's point. Finally the Dictator consented to take £1 17s. 6d. and the rest in promises of good will for the future.

CHAPTER XXII

September to September

It was my fate to have to address from the chair, as President, the Autumn Meetings of our denominational Provincial Assembly on September 28th at Lewes. We were discussing some such subject as "Christianity and War," and I had taken as my particular subject "Casting Out Fear," and it was only after I had sat down that the Rev. R. W. Sorensen, M.P., arrived from the House and told us of Hitler's invitation to the Four Powers Conference at Munich and of the postponement of the German general mobilisation. I thus had to speak without that knowledge when we were expecting news any moment of the outbreak of war. In Appendix IV at the end of this volume the gist of what I said is in the form of an article in our weekly organ setting forth the effect of the tremendous events I have recalled on at least one believer in and striver for Collective Security. I know it represents the thoughts of many others at that time. I add in Appendix V an address which I gave at Essex Hall in the following January in response to an invitation to give my own answer to the prophet's question, "Watchman, what of the night?" during those nightmare months between the dismembering and the ultimate destruction of Czechoslovakia when we were digging bomb-proof trenches in our parks and arranging the evacuation of our children in the fear that after all we had *not* bought peace at Munich.

It remains to examine the momentous happenings between September 29, 1938, when the British Prime Minister signed the Munich Agreement, and September 3, 1939, when after all he declared Britain to be at war with Germany. Later we shall have to discuss the effect of these happenings when war was first avoided and then declared on the minds of those who had till then supported the use of force in the name of Collective Security but were unable to do so for any lesser object.

The position on the morrow of Munich was put rather brutally but scarcely with unfairness by the Leader of the Opposition, when Parliament met on October 3rd.¹ Major Attlee said:

¹ The position on the morrow of Munich in Czechoslovakia was put in a telegram from the Presidents of the Czech Chamber of Deputies and the Senate to the Speaker

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To what has the Prime Minister committed us? Unless the new guarantee is inoperative [it did *not* ultimately operate], doesn't it commit this country to making war on an aggressor if the new Czechoslovakia is violated? . . . Having decided to leave the League system to embark on a policy of alliances and power politics, the Government cannot even play the game intelligently. Mr. Chamberlain has been the dupe of the dictators. To-day Britain is in a dangerous position. In the place of covenants and Collective Security to buttress Britain and the Empire, we are left with two promises, one from Mussolini and one from Hitler.

On the same occasion the Prime Minister said:

The path that leads to peace is a long one and bristles with obstacles. The question of Czechoslovakia is the latest and perhaps the most dangerous. Now that we have got past it I feel that it may be possible to make further progress along the road to sanity.

If comment on that sentence is beyond us, events did it for us. Only a month later a young Polish Jew assassinated a German diplomat in Paris with the result that a ferocious attack on German Jewry, officially described as "spontaneous," but bearing evidence of systematic organisation, began throughout Germany at precisely 2 a.m. on November 10, 1938. From all parts of Germany poured reports of looting, arson, torture and even murder. It is computed that between 35,000 and 40,000 Jews were arrested in all Germany, excluding Austria and the Sudetenland, and that 166 synagogues were destroyed. In Berlin alone 3,000 Jewish shops and stores were wrecked by gangs, whom Dr. Goebbels declared himself unable to control—although it was he who broadcast the instruction to cease looting when it became clear that property shortly to be "Arianised" was suffering serious damage.² Most of the arrested Jews were taken to concentration camps,

of the British House of Commons and the President of the French Chamber of Deputies "appealing to the conscience of the French and British Parliaments": "We turn to-day to all the noble spirits of Europe and of the world, demanding that they should recognise our position. We appeal to them to understand the moral revolution which has caused the punishment of a State and a nation which wanted nothing more than to fulfil its obligations; a nation which had real faith in the high principles of human co-operation; a nation which committed no other wrong than the desire to live in its own fashion in the cultural community of nations and States. We bequeath our sorrow to the French and British peoples."² And the Czech Government's comment on the Godesberg proposals applied also to the Munich Anglo-German dictate, which was worse, that they "deprived us of every safeguard of our national existence. We are to yield up large proportions of our carefully prepared defences and admit the German armies deep into our country. . . . Our national and economic independence would automatically disappear with the acceptance of Herr Hitler's plan."

² *The Liberal Magazine*, 1938, p. 584.

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where large numbers of them were reported to have been done to death.

This, the greatest pogrom in Third Reich history, proved in its way as great an obstacle in the path that leads to peace as the question of Czechoslovakia. Not exactly helpful was another "unofficial" demonstration—though less immediately sinister—in Italy, the British Prime Minister's other objective in his appeasement policy. In the Italian Chamber on November 30th deputies with one accord shouted claims to Tunis, Corsica and Nice, the culmination of an increasingly vehement anti-French Press campaign with specific demands for the cession of French possessions in the Mediterranean. The steady stonewalling of this agitation by the French Government seemed so far to remove this particular obstacle in the path to peace. This may have been helped by the British Ambassador, who was believed at the time to have raised the question of the Italian claims to Tunis and to have pointed out that Britain would regard any such demand as being contrary to the Anglo-Italian Agreement—the Agreement which had survived Ethiopia and Spain and was to survive the annexation of Albania. However that may have been, it was announced that the French Government had been informed that Italy considered the Mussolini-Laval Agreement of January 1935 as null and void, to which the French Government tartly replied that, on the contrary, the 1935 Treaty was still valid, that France had fulfilled all her obligations and declined to initiate new negotiations.

On December 7th the Prague Statistical Bureau stated that after the last "corrections" of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia the Republic had lost to Germany, Poland and Hungary (who rushed in behind Germany to "correct" their frontiers too), altogether 4,922,440 inhabitants—almost a third of its former population. Of these 2,853,858 were Germans, but there were also 1,161,616 Czechs and Slovaks, the rest being Hungarians, Poles and Jews.

In the present Czechoslovak Republic there are 8,527,154 Czechs and Slovaks, 512,289 Ruthenians, 377,832 Germans, 100,379 Hungarians, 4,157 Poles and 126,310 Jews.

So Mr. Chamberlain's "surgical operation necessary to save the life of the patient"³ did not cure Czechoslovakia of the disease of a mixed population—and the patient died after all, as will shortly appear.

³ Speech at Birmingham on March 17, 1939.

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On January 4, 1939, President Roosevelt said:

We stand by our historic offer to take counsel with all other nations of the world to the end that aggression amongst them may be terminated, the race in armaments cease and commerce be renewed.

Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Rome accompanied by Lord Halifax in the name of appeasement took place on January 11th with no published results. The Italian Press campaign against France continued unmitigated, and of course the Italian breaches of non-intervention in Spain continued also. Barcelona fell on January 28th. Franco's Government was recognised by Britain on February 27th and the Spanish President resigned the same day though Madrid did not fall till March 28th.

Then came the catastrophic sequel to Munich. That part of Czechoslovakia formerly under Hungarian rule, called Slovakia, was granted Home Rule by the Czechoslovak Parliament by a negotiated agreement of all parties, but an extreme faction wanted independence.

Hatred of the Czechs was deliberately fostered for years by the Slovak autonomists. Much harm was undoubtedly done by the short-sighted bureaucratic policy of centralisation pursued in Prague, and also by the somewhat tactless behaviour of some of the Czechs employed in Slovakia, who did not appreciate sufficiently the susceptibilities of the Slovaks, a primitive people whose national consciousness was only just coming to life again. But a deeper cause of this unfriendliness was the new-found nationalism of the Slovaks, which, having been consistently trampled underfoot by the Hungarians, was first able to develop in the Czechoslovak Republic. . . .

Although a certain amount of appeasement ensued after the election (on December 18, 1938) of the first Slovak Parliament, this movement was rapidly cut short in March 1939. The election was, of course, organised on Nazi lines; only one list of candidates was presented to the electorate, only official propaganda was allowed, and the voting was, in practice, not secret, but public. . . .

[Then] the very change of mind which became apparent among some of the more sober-minded Slovak autonomists was the signal to the Slovak extremists and the German Nazis collaborating with them to make real consolidation of the relations between Czechs and Slovaks impossible.⁴

On March 10th the Czechoslovak Government, learning that the Slovak Chief Minister, Mgr. Tiso, was planning to overthrow the Republic, dismissed him. Thereupon he visited Berlin and after his conference there with Hitler, the Slovak Diet declared Slovakia's

⁴ Dr. Ripka, *Munich: Before and After*, pp. 257-360.

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independence, while the Czechoslovak President, Dr. Hácha, was summoned to Berlin in his turn. There he was required, under threat of the aerial bombardment of Prague, to "sign an instrument placing the fate of the Czech people in the hands of Hitler." German troops, and then Hitler, arrived at Prague on the morning of March 15th. He took up his residence in the Castle of the Bohemian Kings and next day signed a decree placing Bohemia and Moravia under the "protection" of the Reich and sent a telegram to Tiso undertaking the "protection" also of the new Slovak State.

Sir Neville Henderson calls the Prague coup "not only a political blunder of the first magnitude: it was no less a tactical error." Czechoslovakia, he says, could well have waited

and in due course have been reduced to the necessary state of vassalage by methodical and relentless economic pressure. . . . It was a case of his love of displaying his mastery of opportunism proving stronger than his sense of judgment. The Czech-Slovak quarrel was too good a chance to be missed, and so was the opportunity for putting Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier in their places for their presumptuous interference at Munich with Germany's freedom of action in Central Europe. Furthermore, it was easy for Hitler to find for the satisfaction of his own people both military and economic excuses for the gratification of his own personal ambitions and resentments, since even Munich had not assuaged his rage against the Czechs for their attitude in May 1938. It was, I think, Bismarck who said that "who holds Bohemia holds Central Europe." The strategic importance of the two provinces is, indeed, obvious from a mere glance at the map.⁵

But what of the Anglo-French guarantee of the new Czech frontiers? It was only on the actual day when Czechoslovakia had ceased to exist that Mr. Chamberlain explained (in the House of Commons) that the solemn promise in both the Munich Agreement and in the Anglo-French Proposals preceding it to "join in an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression" had not been carried out because "up to the present the Government had been unable to reach an agreement with other Governments on the scope and terms of a guarantee to Czechoslovakia, and therefore Britain was *not bound by* any obligation in the matter"! Moreover, said the British Prime Minister,

In my opinion the situation has radically altered since the Slovak Diet declared the independence of Slovakia. The effect of this declara-

⁵ *Failure of a Mission*, p. 211.

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tion put an end by internal disruption to the State whose frontiers we had proposed to guarantee.

Sir Archibald Sinclair replied:

We all know that it is not the independence of Slovakia that has been proclaimed but the dependence of Slovakia upon Germany. . . . The Prime Minister will forgive me if I say that the effect of his statement of the facts was to suggest to the House and the country that an internal movement for independence had taken place and that the Slovaks were throwing off the Czech yoke. To anybody who knows the facts of the situation in Czechoslovakia that conception will not hold water.

It will be remembered that the Czechoslovak Government said that they had accepted the Anglo-French Proposals, "under the most severe pressure," because they understood "that these two Powers would accept responsibility for our reduced frontiers and would guarantee us their support in the event of our being feloniously attacked." Perhaps the midnight "third degree methods" practised on Hácha by Hitler and Goering in Berlin was not considered a felonious attack.

It will be remembered that Czechoslovakia was not asked to agree to the Munich Agreement: it was thought sufficient that we agreed to secure its execution. And as to that "instrument" signed in the small hours of the morning by the Czechoslovak President with Hitler and Goering as witnesses, the U.S.S.R. Government made the sufficient comment:

The Soviet Government is not aware of any State Constitution that entitles the Head of a State to abolish its independent existence as a State without the consent of his people. It is difficult to admit that any people would voluntarily agree to the destruction of their independence and to their inclusion in another State, still less a people that for hundreds of years fought for their independence and for twenty years maintained their independent existence.

Mr. Chamberlain was indignant at the suggestion that his Munich policy was responsible for the destruction of Czechoslovakia:

The facts as they are to-day cannot change the facts as they were last September. If I was right then, I am still right now. . . . After all, the first and most immediate object of my visit was achieved. The peace of Europe was saved.

That was just what people were beginning to doubt, and the Prime Minister himself now changed his policy just because he too was no

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longer sure. And the end was not yet. Sir Archibald Sinclair summed up the position as it developed some four months later:⁶

Munich had weakened the forces of law and order in Europe and strengthened those of aggression; had undermined belief in the firmness of British purpose; and had convinced the German people and the army leaders that they must trust Hitler. "Therefore, far from saving peace, Munich has made peace more difficult to save."

⁶ Speech on July 1st at Kempston Manor, near Bedford.

CHAPTER XXIII

September to September

Continued

So the facts as they were the previous September *had* been changed, inasmuch as peace, so far from being saved, had become "more difficult to save." Indeed, immediately Czechoslovakia had been settled to his liking, Hitler began to bring pressure on Rumania in the form of "economic proposals," and on March 23rd Germany signed a trade agreement giving her virtual control of Rumania's natural resources. On March 21st an ultimatum was sent to Lithuania, and on a threat of invasion and aerial bombardment that Government ceded Memel to the Reich.

Meanwhile, the British Government rejected Russia's proposal for a Six-Power Conference, but circulated to various European capitals the text of a Declaration pledging the signatories to "consult" in the event of further aggression. The Declaration was at once accepted by France and Russia but by no others and no more was heard of it.

On March 28th the German Press opened a virulent campaign attacking Poland for alleged "atrocities" against German nationals.

On March 29th the British Territorial Force was doubled and on March 31st Mr. Chamberlain announced that while "certain consultations were proceeding with other Governments, in order to make perfectly clear the position" of the Government, he had to inform the House that,

In the event of any action which clearly threatens Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly consider it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power.

The significance of this momentous announcement is discussed in Chapter XXV. Here we have to complete our review of the eventful "September to September" year.

On March 26th Mussolini said that, in regard to France,

The problems which had to be settled included Tunis, Jibuti, and

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the Suez Canal. He emphasised the permanence of the "Axis" and the necessity for rearmament but said that he considered "a long period of peace necessary for the development of European civilisation." Permanent peace he would regard as "a catastrophe for the human race."

He asked France for her answer to Italian demands and France replied (in a broadcast by her Prime Minister) that she had had no demands, that she would be ready to negotiate in the spirit of the 1935 Agreement, but that she would yield neither an acre of territory nor a single one of her rights. Thereafter the Italian end of the Axis seemed less keen on a fight than it had been.

Nevertheless, on April 7th, Italy invaded Albania (*that* did not involve a fight). Albania was admitted to the League of Nations on December 17, 1920. Italy invaded it on King Zog's rejection of terms proposed by Italy which he deemed incompatible with the national independence of his country. There is no record that he appealed to the League under any of the Articles of the Covenant which would seem to be applicable to the circumstances (perhaps he had noted the fate of appeals from Ethiopia and Spain against Mussolini's designs): he merely fled to Greece, and no State Member of the League seems to have raised the matter in the Council or the Assembly.

The landing was spasmodically resisted, but on Count Ciano's arrival at the capital by air next day he was met by the commander of the forces and a "deputation of Albanian officers and citizens." A "Provisional Council" summoned a "Constituent Assembly" which offered the crown to King Victor Emanuel, who thenceforth was styled King of Italy and Albania and Emperor of Ethiopia. The League had ceased to function.

Mr. Chamberlain said that "public opinion throughout the world had once again been profoundly shocked by this fresh exhibition of the use of force."¹ The Government had found it "difficult in the extreme" to reconcile what had happened with the pledge in the Anglo-Italian Agreement (signed after his visit to Rome) to maintain "the national sovereignty of the territory in the Mediterranean area."

No doubt [he went on] some would say that we should now declare that the Anglo-Italian Agreement must be considered at an end. I do

¹ "After last autumn I think the great majority of the British people had clearly made up their minds as to the character of the present German and Italian leadership. And yet both the entry of German troops into Prague in March and the Italian invasion of Albania on Good Friday admittedly took our own Government entirely by surprise. Frankly I do not understand why."—Mr. Eden at Kenilworth, May 24, 1939.

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not take that view myself. Nobody with any sense of responsibility can in these days lightly do anything which would lead to an increase in international tension, and everybody would deplore the loss of the advantages that follow from international agreements arrived at after mutual discussion.

And he felt this way about an Agreement through which a coach-and-four had just been driven and asked his countrymen to feel the same.

On April 25th President Roosevelt issued his invitation to Germany and Italy to promise not to invade thirty named countries for the next ten years. Of course they did not promise, but Hitler in his reply (April 29th) took the opportunity to tell the President and the world the terms he had just offered to Poland² and to announce the annulment of the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact.

On April 27th Mr. Chamberlain introduced his Compulsory Military Training Plan. Since his previous statement (refusing conscription) four weeks ago, he said, he had changed his mind.

Nothing could be more stupid, more likely to lead the country to disaster, than that the Government should refuse to change their mind when changed conditions required it.

Meanwhile, the endeavour to build up a "Peace Front" against Germany proceeded, *after* the guarantee had been issued to Poland. Guarantees were given to Greece and Rumania also and negotiations proceeded for a Pact with Turkey. The endeavour to bring Russia in was held up by the surely reasonable stipulation that Britain and France should join in guarantees to Russia's Baltic neighbours in return for her joining in giving guarantees of the countries in which Britain and France were more directly interested.³

The resignation came on May 3rd of M. Litvinoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, who believed in the League of Nations and Collective

² See p. 161 below.

³ As M. Molotoff, M. Litvinoff's successor at the Russian Foreign Office, said to the Soviet Parliament on May 31st: "As regards the question of guaranteeing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the proposals mentioned make no progress whatever, if regarded from the standpoint of reciprocity. They provide for assistance being given by the U.S.S.R. to five countries, which the British and French have already promised to guarantee, but they say nothing about the assistance being given by them to the three countries on the north-western frontier of the U.S.S.R., which may prove unable to defend their neutrality in the event of attack by aggressors. But the Soviet Union cannot assume obligations in regard to the five countries mentioned unless it receives the guarantee in regard to the three countries situated on its north-west frontier." The three countries were Latvia, Estonia and—not Lithuania but—Finland! More of that anon.

September to September

Security and who had secured the Russian guarantee of Czechoslovakia through France for the fulfilment of which France never called. Even in face of this warning the dislike within the British Cabinet of being tied up with Bolsheviks continued to slow down negotiations.

On May 5th M. Beck answered Hitler's "proposals," which answer Hitler treated as a final rejection.⁴

On June 29th Lord Halifax, who was so much better a Foreign Secretary than Mr. Chamberlain when he was allowed to act, delivered at the annual "Chatham House" dinner of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Grosvenor House a powerful plea for reasonableness. "Germany is isolating herself, and is doing it most successfully and completely."

The last thing we desire is to see the individual German man, or woman, or child suffering privations; but, if they do so, the fault does not lie with us, and it depends on the German Government, and the German Government alone, whether this process of isolation continues or not, for any day it can be ended by a policy of co-operation. . . . In such a new atmosphere we could examine the colonial problem, the question of raw materials, trade barriers, the issue of *Lebensraum* [living space], the limitation of armaments, and any other issue that affects the lives of all European citizens.

On July 4th it was agreed between the two Dictators that all Germans must leave (Italian) South Tyrol.

On July 13th General Ironside visited Warsaw and discussed with Polish army chiefs the military aspects of the Anglo-Polish Agreement.

On August 7th the Danzig Nazi leader, Forster, flew to Berlin to confer with Hitler.

On August 19th the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact was foreshadowed, ending the hope of Russian participation in the "Peace Front," and next day it was announced that this Pact in no way affected our Pact with Poland (which Hitler did not believe). The Russo-German Pact was signed on August 23rd. President Roosevelt appealed to the King of Italy to intervene and received a sympathetic reply.

On August 24th Forster proclaimed himself Head of the State of Danzig and the British Government obtained emergency powers from Parliament and next day the Anglo-Polish Pact was signed.

On August 27th the Queen of Holland and the Belgian King

⁴ See p. 162 below.

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offered their good offices. Next day the British Ambassador flew back to Berlin after conferring with the British Cabinet.

On August 30th the Poles declined to send a plenipotentiary to Berlin under menace, Beck having "no intention of being treated like President Hácha."

On September 1st Germany invaded Poland and Britain dispatched an ultimatum to Berlin and on September 3rd the Prime Minister declared Britain to be at war with Germany.

CHAPTER XXIV

Poland, Danzig and the Corridor

The ancestors of the Poles, the Lechici, followers of the mythical patriot Lech, were first known to history when the Romans drove them from the Danube to the wilds around the upper waters of the Oder and the Vistula. Then in the tenth century, when the Slav migration extended to the Elbe and the whole shores of the Baltic, the first Polish King, Boleslaus I, conquered a kingdom from the Elbe to the Bug and from the Baltic to the Carpathians. He felt at once the eastward pressure of the displaced Germans, and indeed his father had adopted the Christianity of his Bohemian wife from prudential motives. But the son's imposing realm had collapsed less than twenty years after his death and the whole history of Poland till modern times was a history of the alternate expansion and contraction of the rule of the Poles over their warlike neighbours, Germanic and Slavic alike. Indeed, there were several actual partitions of Poland in mediaeval times as well as in modern by the acts of kings who had several sons to provide for. The long struggles on the one hand with the Teutonic Knights and on the other with the Russian Slavs, the Tartar hordes and the Slavs again, were more directly prophetic of the recent activities of the two Dictators and *their* hordes in once more partitioning Poland.

The three partitions between Russia, Prussia and Austria are an oft-told tale. It may be wondered whether they could have been possible without this background of history. Our immediate concern is not with these partitions of Poland but with her gathering together again at the close of the Great War and her revived ambitions till the present war broke out with the sequel of the Fourth Partition of 1939.

At the gathering together Pole found himself estranged from Pole by the variety of experience the three partitioned sections had undergone. In Prussia Poles were under the heel of the conqueror, their language tabooed and the very smallest liberty denied them. "Congress" Poland ("Congress" because its fate was regulated at the Congress of Vienna) shared with Russia itself the benefits conferred by Liberating Tsars and Liberal Dumas and Social Democracy was the

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ideal. Galicia (Austrian) Poland, playing its own political game in the Reichrath, and locally allowed to look very much after itself, was governed by an oligarchy of Polish nobles and officials. Traditions of the distant past and dreams of the future seemed the only bonds of the divided people now again to be united.

Pilsudski was the uniting force. Leader of right-wing Socialism in Congress Poland, he had to flee from Tsarist repression to Galicia and on the outbreak of the Great War he at first fought and then agitated for a resurrected Poland. During the closing months of the war he played for Poland a similar part to Masaryk for Czechoslovakia among the leaders of the Allied and Associated Powers. Of course with so chequered a history to quote from he had plenty of scope for the advocacy of the allotment of vast territories to represent "Historic" Poland. But Wilson, in the Thirteenth of the Fourteenth Points, demanded only that

an independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations,

adding, however, that this reconstituted nation should

be assured a free and secure access to the sea and [that its] political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

From that time onward Polish history is the story of how boundaries were secured and maintained far beyond the Wilson limits and more in accordance with the most glorious periods of Poland's glorious history. And it is not for other Pioneers of Empire to look askance at them, however much they must resist them!

The great day of days, November 11, 1918, saw Pilsudski (lately released from a German prison) back at Warsaw, the German garrison disarmed and expelled and the Poles assuming the executive power, Pilsudski proclaiming himself Head of the National Government. The immensity of the task before him and them can be better imagined than described. We are concerned here immediately with the definition of boundaries. The position is thus described by M. J. Grabowiecki:¹

Only in the Carpathians could Poland be said to possess a natural frontier. Over the vast and formless Eastern plains, nation merged into nation, and there were vast areas where the very language of the inhabitants was only a doubtful dialect. In others, enclaves of Polish

¹ Of the Polish Foreign Office in his article on "Poland" in Volume III of the Supplementary Volumes constituting the Thirteenth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

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and non-Polish territories were inextricably mixed. In others, and these among the richest, the land-owning nobility was Polish, the peasants Ukrainian or White Russian. Poland's historical frontiers had at one time extended, over large non-Polish populations, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. At the time of the partitions of Poland, they had embraced nearly twice as much territory as was ethnographically Polish. The Poles themselves had learned to think in wide spaces, with more force than restraint.

With powerful neighbours to East and West each far more numerous than themselves, and each at the moment highly unpopular with their victors of the war, the Poles little needed the encouragement which they received to make enormous territorial claims. . . . Paderewski [the Premier] proceeded to Paris to urge Poland's claims; Pilsudski raised an army to defend them

—successfully crabbing the boundary deliberation in Paris. On May 8, 1919, Pilsudski opened an offensive in Eastern Galicia against the Soviet Russia and Ukraina forces.

Poland signed the Versailles Treaty on June 28th, and in Article LXXXVII the line of the Vistula was provisionally fixed as Poland's eastern frontier till the Allies could fix it definitely. The Polish army fighting Russia was well to the east of the river at this time, but nothing was done about it.

The policy of the Allies was extremely uncertain; but in any case it was hostile to Soviet Russia, and there was talk of forming a "sanitary cordon" round the country. The Polish forces, as the largest and most successful of those opposed to Russia, enjoyed considerable support in Western Europe. All the Allies desired a strong Poland, but British statesmen considered that this aim would be best achieved if Poland's frontiers were not excessively extended.²

But when Russia proposed an armistice in the autumn (she still had Kolchak and Denikin to deal with) the "Curzon Line" was laid down on December 8th. This attempted with all the authority which a British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs then wielded to trace the ethnographical frontier well west of the Polish army and west also of Vilna, assigned to Lithuania. But Poland (in the spring of 1920) cheerfully responded to the Russian truce suggestion by claiming (of course "on historical grounds") large non-Polish areas, and occupied Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, on May 8th. Thereupon Russia, having meanwhile beaten Kolchak and Denikin, proceeded to drive Poland back, and on Poland's appeal to the Allies, these suggested that she should

² The same, p. 166.

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retire to the Curzon Line and that a peace conference should be held in London. Russia refused and under the inspiration of Mr. Churchill (a Kolchak-Denikin man) France sent General Weygand to reorganise the Polish army and with this help Pilsudski triumphantly drove back the Russians again and established his Eastern frontier at the Treaty of Riga on October 12, 1920, where it remained for the next nineteen years.

We need not recall in detail how Poland secured East Galicia, which Ukrainians called Western Ukraine, with a promise of autonomy and a revision by the League of Nations in 1944; how the greater part of the Upper Silesian industrial area was awarded by a plebiscite in which "the Poles put great pressure on the inhabitants"³ and the League of Nations under French pressure regularised the line of the plebiscite in a way that Britain disapproved almost as much as did Germany; how a plebiscite in Teschen and district was cancelled by the Supreme Allied Council which, cutting the district in half instead, the division going through the middle of the town, gave half to Poland and half to Czechoslovakia; and how Vilna was "bagged" in defiance of the League of Nations but with the acquiescence, after the deed, of the Ambassadors' Council.

But we must come to Danzig and the Corridor. I have seen no so convincing and, so far as my lights take me, so just and fair a summary of these difficult questions as that of Dr. Gilbert Murray in his section on the territorial changes in his chapter, "Revision of Peace Treaties" in *The Intelligent Man*,⁴ and I am honoured by his permission to transcribe it here:

The Polish Corridor affords the spectacle of a complete conflict of principles. It is commonly spoken of as the type of the "unjust frontiers." Yet from the standpoint of nationality it was probably just in 1919 and it is certainly fair now. The present German figures give it a Slav majority, if to the Poles are added the 115,700 Kashubs who inhabited the bottle-neck of the Corridor. Had a plebiscite been held, it is likely enough that the Kashubs might have voted German, and if the frontier had been drawn by communes the Corridor might not have existed. As it was the Allies used the racial criterion, and no plebiscite was granted. If one were held to-day [1933] there is not the slightest doubt which way it would go. German emigration, encouraged by the Polish official harassing of the minority, has been more than replaced by Polish colonisation; and even the German figures now claim only some 10 per cent of the population.

³ See p. 54 above.

⁴ Pp. 114-17. Written in 1933.

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Economically, the [Peace] Conference insisted that "Immediate and unbroken communication with Danzig and the remainder of the coast by railways which are entirely under the control of the Polish State is essential." It dismissed the inconvenience to East Prussia, whose trade with Germany proper was mainly sea-borne, as negligible. Hence the attribution to Poland of the Corridor and the Vistula, including even the formerly German part of the East bank, coupled with those political rights of Poland in Danzig which have caused perpetual friction ever since. Here it may fairly be argued that Poland would have been better served commercially by the German project of an effective international control of the Vistula and a secure access for Poland to Königsberg, Danzig and Memel. The inevitable quarrels over privileges in Danzig, fought out with sordid publicity in the League Council, have resulted in the construction of Gdynia, a rival port on the sea-end of the Corridor, into which Poland has poured great sums.

Is it difficult to-day to imagine any alternative scheme which would compensate Poland for Gdynia. Some minor ameliorations could well be made. Danzig should be allowed to decide by plebiscite whether it should continue its uneasy but prosperous existence as a free city and the main port for Polish trade, or join East Prussia and sacrifice its commerce to nationalism. Certainly the German inhabitants of the Vistula bank should be given access to the river by shifting the frontier to mid-channel: and the upkeep of the riparian works should be internationalised. Strategically, of course, the Corridor is useless to Poland; in case of a war with Germany, the two Prussias would nip it off instantly. Indeed it constitutes a danger to the Polish State, through the sense of grievance, however unreasonable, which it engenders in the German mind. The division of Germany into a "mainland" and "island" is repulsive to modern nationalism, which is based on the concept of the territorial State. The German grievance is not ethical, but geographical and sentimental; but it is not the less acute for that, and in fact the Corridor has become the symbol of *Germania Irredenta*. Poland, on the other side, feels quite as strongly about a territory which she has rendered effectively Polish. It must be realised that the only remedy for this dangerous condition of feeling lies in the relaxation of economic and of political tension between the two countries, of which before the Nazi revolution there was some sign.

There is, of course, no reason why these treaties should claim any greater immunity from peaceful revision than any of their predecessors. The political map of Europe has never remained unaltered for many decades since history began. The difference between the present settlement and all those that went before it is that those were founded for the most part on naked force, and were subject to immediate readjustment as soon as the balance of forces on which they depended had altered. The present settlement was meant to stand on a footing of justice, and should therefore be unaffected by the relative forces of the parties interested. This very fact, however, makes the claim to revision

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all the stronger where it is apparent that there is a miscarriage of justice, intentional or accidental. Nor can those who press for revision be dismissed as mere disturbers of the peace. The Covenant of the League expressly provides the possibility of treaty revision in its Nineteenth Article. It is true that the wording of that Article is exceedingly cautious, and it had not yet been found possible to utilise it effectively. Yet it is there, and is as much a part of the Covenant as Article X or any other of the conservatory articles. Indeed, in thus providing explicitly for the possibility of revision the Covenant has gone a great deal further than most earlier treaty settlements which, whether their actual duration proved to be one year, or ten, or twenty, or fifty, have easily been concluded for all perpetuity, and without any provision for modification.

That was all written six years and a half before the outbreak of war on this very subject. The British Prime Minister has himself spoken severely of the neglect of Article XIX, leaving it innocuous "until passions have become so exasperated that revision by agreement became impossible." It was on September 28, 1938, he said that "for that omission all Members of the League must bear their responsibility." And surely a Government which found itself a year later bound to defend by force of arms the "unilateral revision" by force of arms of an agreement thus criticised above and well known to bear the seeds of future disputes for twenty years and more must feel a specially grave responsibility to the "young men not yet dead"⁵ whom they call to repair the omission with their lives.

Almost simultaneously with Mr. Chamberlain's discovery of Article XIX in relation to the Sudeten problem, in regard to this other problem of Danzig and the Corridor Hitler was assuring the world that his agreement with Pilsudski (not to raise that issue at all for ten years) had removed the danger of a conflict between Germany and Poland for at least ten years; while in January 1939 he said that "during the troubled months of the last year the friendship between Germany and Poland was one of the reassuring factors in the political life of Europe." Only three months later, in March, the atrocities campaign against Poland was opened with special virulence and Von Ribbentrop proposed to the Polish Ambassador in Berlin that discussions might begin to find a permanent solution to the Danzig problem. Hitler announced in the Reichstag on April 28th that the proposals "submitted" to the Polish Government were:

⁵ Poem of the Poet Laureate, see Appendix IV below.

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(1) Danzig returns as a Free State into the framework of the German Reich.

(2) Germany receives a route through the Corridor and a railway line at her own disposal possessing the same extra-territorial status for Germany as the Corridor itself had for Poland.

In return, Germany was prepared—

(1) To recognise all Polish economic rights in Danzig.

(2) To ensure for Poland a free harbour in Danzig of any size desired which would have complete free access to the sea.

(3) To accept at the same time the present boundaries between Germany and Poland and to regard them as ultimate.

(4) To conclude a twenty-four-year non-aggression treaty with Poland, a treaty therefore which would extend far beyond the "duration of my own life." . . .

"The Polish Government," said Hitler, "have rejected my offer and have only declared that they are prepared (1) to negotiate concerning the question of a substitute for the Commissioner of the League of Nations and (2) to consider facilities for the transit traffic through the Corridor." And that, in Hitler's view, ended the matter as far as negotiations were concerned.

The Polish version of what had happened was given in a speech by M. Beck, Foreign Minister, in the Sejm on May 5th:

When after the repeated statements of German statesmen who respected our views and expressed the opinion that "this provincial town will not be the object of conflict between Poland and Germany," I hear a demand for the annexation of Danzig to the Reich, when I get no reply to our proposals for a common guarantee of the existence and the rights of the Free City, and when I learn subsequently that this has been regarded as a refusal to negotiate, I have to ask myself what is the real aim of it all. Is it the freedom of the German population of Danzig (which is not menaced) or a question of prestige? . . . We have no reason to obstruct the German citizens in their communications with their eastern province, but we have, on the other hand, no ground whatever for restricting our sovereignty over our own territory.

And that was the end of "diplomacy" on *that* issue. It must be added in the words of the Official British comment on the "German White Book" issued after the war broke out,

The German Government implies that the British guarantee to Poland was made before the Polish rejection of the German offer of March 1939. In fact, the British guarantee was not offered to Poland until after these terms had been refused as incompatible with Polish independence, and after the Germans had been unwilling to listen to Polish counter-proposals.

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I am glad to take this opportunity of stating again the general policy of His Majesty's Government. They have constantly advocated the adjustment by way of free negotiation between the parties concerned, of any differences that may arise between them. They consider this is the natural and proper course where differences exist. In their opinion there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means and they would see no justification for the substitution of force or threats of force for the method of negotiation.

As the House is aware, certain consultations are now proceeding with other Governments. In order to make perfectly clear the position of His Majesty's Government in the meantime before these consultations are concluded, I now have to inform the House that during that period, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly considers it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.

I may add that the French Government have authorised us to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty's Government.—Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons on March 31, 1939.

I do not think it was realised at the time what an absolute *volte-face* in Britain's foreign policy this announcement represented. We gave an undertaking to Belgium in the last century in the case of actual invasion from either side but only in common with the other Great Powers, and it was an immense surprise when the circumstances arose in which we had to implicate it. We steadily refused to give France any such guarantee up to the outbreak of the World War and it was only a year or two ago that Mr. Chamberlain assured the House of Commons, not very tactfully, that there was, even then, no pledge to go to France's assistance if she was attacked. Germany, by the by, no more believed that we should honour our pledge to Belgium than she thought we should honour the similar undertaking to Poland in 1939.

We innocents believed that Britain had given an undertaking as binding when we read Article X above her signature of the Covenant.

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But recent Foreign Ministers explained that it was not so. Even Mr. Chamberlain's elder half-brother, Sir Austen Chamberlain, the architect of Locarno, persistently refused to guarantee Germany's eastern neighbours as he did her western on the exact lines of Article X, though it cannot now be doubted that the noted fact led to the continued unrest in Eastern Europe as well as whetting the ambitions of the Nazis. He used almost his brother's words about Czechoslovakia—that the protection of Poland and Rumania was not among "our vital interests." Yet believers in the Covenant supposed that its signatories all agreed that the preservation of the peace by the Collective Security of all of them was "vital" to all of them.

Believers in the Covenant might rightly contend that the defence of Poland from an aggressor became "vital" just because the defence of Czechoslovakia, Austria, Albania, Spain, Ethiopia, China were not considered "vital" when the aggressors showed their aggressive intentions in these places also. As we neglected to realise the vital importance of the defence of first one and then another the vitalness became progressively more and more obvious till it would be ignored no longer, and let it readily be granted, more and more onerous—through our own fault.

But how sudden was the conversion and how remarkable was the occasion! How sudden: the announcement quoted above was made, as has been said, on March 31, 1939. Just sixteen days before Sir John Simon, answering the suggestion that Britain should have organised a combination of Powers in defence of Czechoslovakia (of the signatories of the Covenant, for instance), said:

The House will see that if you have this great conference in which all who are willing can join . . . it ceases to be a case of our own judgment being left to us and it becomes a case of automatic action. . . . Our duty to our own people requires us to adopt a more cautious policy.

This is the same thing as Mr. Chamberlain said a year earlier (March 24, 1938), which we have already quoted, when he spoke of the suggestion that we should give to France a promise to help her in resisting a forcible interference with Czechoslovakia:

The decision as to whether or not this country should find itself involved in war would be automatically removed from the discretion of His Majesty's Government, and the suggested guarantee would apply irrespective of the circumstances by which it was brought into opera-

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tion, and over which His Majesty's Government might not have been able to exercise any control. The position is not one that His Majesty's Government could see their way to accept in relation to an area where their vital interests are not concerned to the same degree as they are in the case of France and Belgium.

Yet this is just what the new pledge to Poland did, being given not to France or to a Conference of Powers but to Poland only "to lend the Polish Government all support in their power" in the event of any action "clearly threatening Polish independence and which *the Polish Government* accordingly considered it vital to resist." There was not even a reservation that the clash must not be in consequence in our view of unreasonableness on Poland's part in previous negotiations. The case against Poland in regard to her conduct of the negotiations for the solution of the dispute might be as clear as possible, but if Poland says "No," however unreasonably, and her opponent goes to war, that would "clearly threaten Polish independence" and "the decision as to whether or not this country should find themselves involved in war would be automatically removed from the discretion of His Majesty's Government." For Poland we would do this—*did* this—but not for Czechoslovakia. And note that we did it without any of the safeguards and careful machinery of investigation and the unanimity of the States Members of the League under the Covenant.

It has to be admitted that as the vital importance of successive crises became more and more obvious so also intervention became more and more onerous. How much less would it have cost us to defend the earlier victims by resolutely applied economic sanctions side by side with States Members of the League, or Czechoslovakia by force of arms with the pledged help of Russia than it is to "defend" Poland without the help of either Czechoslovakia¹ or Russia.

¹ According to the *Bulletin of International Affairs*, the annexation of Czechoslovakia provided Germany with gold and foreign exchange to the value of 200,000,000 Reichsmarks held in the National Bank, plus reserves of private banks and individuals, and details of Germany's other gains taken from estimates published in *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* as summarised in the *Liberal Magazine* (volume for 1939, p. 155) included heavy industrial equipment, stocks of raw materials and foodstuffs, and reserves of labour. Of such products as iron ore, lead, magnesite and other minerals, Czechoslovakia possessed insufficient for her own needs; while for many essential commodities she relied on export trade with Western Powers. Germany's chief gain, therefore, appears to have been large stocks of industrial raw materials, valued at approximately £250,000,000; and considerable quantities of armaments. These latter include about 1,700 aircraft, of which not more than 500 were first-line planes, about 200,000 rifles, and 3,500 guns of various calibres, the Skoda munition works, the factory for Bren guns in

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Again, it was said in relation to Czechoslovakia as to some earlier victims that intervention could not have been in time. Ponder this passage² in Mr. Chamberlain's Birmingham speech:

Really I have no need to defend my visit to Germany³ last autumn, for what was the alternative? Nothing that we could have done, nothing that France could have done, or Russia could have done could possibly have saved Czechoslovakia from invasion and destruction. Even if we had subsequently gone to war to punish Germany for her actions, and if after the frightful losses which would have been inflicted upon all partakers in the war we had been victorious in the end, never could we have reconstituted Czechoslovakia as she was framed by the Treaty of Versailles.

Every word of this, spoken of Czechoslovakia, was true in September 1939 of Poland before Poland had been overrun by Germany and is at least equally true now that Poland has been once more partitioned. The only difference is that at long last the curbing of aggression was recognised as a "vital interest" of Britain as it was thought to be of all States Members of the League by those who drew up the Covenant. (We shall have to review this assumption, that the real cause of the war, for those who declared it, was primarily the resistance of aggression upon others, and not simply the reduction of the too great power of another Great Power.)

Of Czechoslovakia Mr. Chamberlain said:⁴

However much we may sympathise with a small nation confronted by a big, powerful neighbour we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in war simply on her account. If we have to fight it must be on larger issues than that.

The whole British Empire is at war now—because its "vital interests" are involved, say the apologists, as apparently they were not a year earlier. (We shall have to investigate why.)

But perhaps the most remarkable distinction between the cases of Czechoslovakia and Poland was crystallised by Mr. Churchill:⁵

The position in which we find ourselves to-day is very similar to what happened last year, but with this very important difference—this

Brno, and six aircraft factories. And of course some small part of the fighting man power sympathising with the invaders added to the refugees who had already volunteered.

² On March 17, 1939.

³ Meaning his surrender of Czechoslovakia there.

⁴ Broadcast speech, September 17, 1939.

⁵ At City Carlton Club on June 28, 1939.

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year no means of retreat are now open. We had no treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia. We had never guaranteed their security. It is important that that fact should be insisted upon. But now we have given an absolute guarantee to Poland that if she is the object of unprovoked aggression by Nazi Germany we, in company with our French Allies, will be forced to declare war. There is the brute fact which stares us in the face—and very closely in the face in point of time.

But the Government made this difference itself, and very deliberately, for reasons which have never yet been candidly explained and has yet to be investigated. The whole question is whether we should or should not have given a guarantee to the Czechs and whether we should or should not have given a guarantee to the Poles. It will be noticed that Mr. Churchill asserted by implication that our signature of the Covenant with its Tenth Article and its Collective Security was not a guarantee by us to Czechoslovakia for *its* security. Yet this is the statesman who rounded on the neutrals for their backwardness in backing us up, in the name of this very Covenanted Collective Security which we ourselves had steadily refused to honour. The smaller States were to help a Great Power against another Great Power though that Great Power had refused to help other Powers, great or small, on the same good plea. No wonder that the Oslo Powers decided in July 1938, during the gathering storm, "never to take part in any conflict between the Great Powers."⁶ And one wonders whether the neutrals ever heard that Mr. Churchill once said,⁷ "The only absurd thing about Collective Security was that it did not exist."

The assertion must be controverted, then, that the real cause of this war at the time was primarily the resistance of aggression upon others, however much the outlook has changed since. The then Government's quite obvious object was simply the reduction of the too great power of another Great Power. In short we were back to the old inspiring ideal of the Balance of Power. And as to that ideal Lowes Dickinson made the sufficient commentary during the last war:⁸

Britain has long stood, as she stands now, for the Balance of Power. As ambitious, as quarrelsome, and as aggressive as other States, her geographical position has directed her aims over seas rather than towards the Continent of Europe. Since the fifteenth century her power

⁶ See p. 136 above.

⁷ In the House of Commons, March 14, 1938.

⁸ *The European Anarchy* (George Allen & Unwin), pp. 11, 12.

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has never menaced the Continent. On the contrary, her own interest has dictated that she should resist there the enterprise of empire, and join the defensive efforts of the threatened States. To any State of Europe that has conceived the ambition to dominate the Continent this policy of England has seemed as contrary to the interests of civilisation as the policy of the Papacy appeared in Italy to an Italian patriot like Machiavelli. He wanted Italy enslaved, in order that it might be united. And so do some Germans now want Europe enslaved, that it may have peace under Germany. They accuse England of perpetuating for egoistic ends the state of anarchy. But it was not thus that Germany viewed British policy when the Power that was to give peace to Europe was not Germany, but France. In this long and bloody game partners are always changing, and as partners change so do views. One thing only does not change, the fundamental anarchy.

Collective Security was to change all this but

⁹Again and again since the last war Britain and France have refused to accept the same risks for the defence of the international order which they would readily have accepted to repel attack upon their own territorial possessions, a scale of values which must make law, and ultimately defence, impossible.¹⁰ We have therefore our share of responsibility for the Nazi phenomenon. Our cause can triumph, and a repetition of the tragedy of 1918 can be avoided only if we can persuade the neutral world and ultimately the enemy people that the principle for which we now fight will be a permanent feature of our future policy; that in future our power will be used to resist aggression by the defence of its victims even though the aggression is not aimed directly at ourselves.

⁹ *For What Do We Fight?* by Sir Norman Angell (Hamish Hamilton), pp. 2, 3.

¹⁰ "Since you won't protect us from the gangsters," said a Balkan statesman to the present writer, "we must place ourselves under the protection of the gangsters and make the best bargain we can."—Sir Norman Angell in *Peace with the Dictators?* (Hamish Hamilton), p. 320.

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So on September 3, 1939, we went to war with Germany, as we did on August 4, 1914. During those twenty-five years masses of people in every country came to believe that war had been demonstrated to be of no use for the forwarding of world ideals: that it set up a vicious circle—war; a dictated peace with punishment or revenge; resentment and thirst for revenge on the other side; and war again—a vicious circle which must be broken at all costs at the next link, i.e. before another war. The popular demonstrations of which Mr. Chamberlain was the centre at Munich and in Downing Street in September 1938, based, perhaps, not on very clear thinking—premature enthusiasm lifted clean off its feet—surely showed two things: hatred of war and scepticism as to its efficacy for good. Those who assured each other, before and after Munich, that the peoples of Europe would prevent their rulers, democratic and autocratic alike, from dragging them into war proved wrong prophets; but the quietness and sombreness with which the nations adjusted themselves once more to war conditions spoke of silent war reflections not very far removed, at any rate, from disbelief in and hatred of war.

And what was it all about, anyway?

The British people at the present moment are disheartened by the fact that they do not know what they are fighting for. The old slogan of "Make the world safe for democracy" awakes no response whatever in their hearts. The cry "Down with Hitler" does not appeal to any sensible person as an objective for which it is worth sacrificing the lives of many men. We may feel deeply sorry for Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, yet we do not see why the whole future of the British Empire should be imperilled for their advantage. We loathe the Nazi system from the very depths of our souls, yet it is a hard thought that we must ourselves adopt Nazi methods in order to defeat the thing that we dislike,

wrote Mr. Harold Nicolson, M.P., within three months of the outbreak of war. So he wrote a "Penguin Special" explaining to his bewildered countrymen *Why Britain Is At War*. The following

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extracts are from his penultimate chapter, "What Are the Real Causes?"¹

For two hundred and fifty years and more the British people have known instinctively that their safety depended upon preventing the Continent of Europe, and therefore their sea communications, from falling into the domination of a single Power. It was this instinct which prompted them (at great cost to themselves) to fight Spain, Holland, Louis XIV, Napoleon and William II. They call this instinct by various names. Sometimes they call it "The Balance of Power"; at other, and more sentimental moments, they call it "The protection of smaller nations." Yet whatever names they may have given to the instinct it was there as a durable, firm and recurrent element in their national destiny. It is a sound biological instinct; it is the instinct of self-preservation. . . .

A tiger had been let loose on Europe and the little countries were not strong enough to resist. It was not because Prague had been seized, or Danzig threatened, that we were alarmed. It was not so much Poland that we guaranteed thereafter; it was our help in catching the murderer. . . .

We are fighting against a civilisation which is lower than that which we, through centuries of trial and error, have ourselves been able to evolve. It is at this stage that the motive of fear, or self-preservation, shades off into the moral motive, which expresses itself in anger. Why should our lovely Christian code of honour surrender to this pagan brutality? Why should the fine culture of France be wrecked by barbarian invasion? It is to prevent such surrenders that we are prepared to fight. . . . We entered this war to defend ourselves. We shall continue to, to its bitter end, in order to save humanity. . . .

If England surrenders, the whole of Europe will surrender. Our responsibility is magnificent and terrible. I should not be willing to sacrifice my life or the lives of my sons for any material victory. I shall willingly sacrifice everything I possess to prevent the victory of this foul and ghoulish idea.

What a descent is there here from the conception of the Covenant with which the last war closed! Our security can no longer hope to rest on the sober combination of all for the sure protection of all, but only on a periodic titanic struggle between a State which seeks to dominate and the self-appointed defender first of himself and incidentally of others, in which the utmost resources of modern warfare must be employed on both sides to the limit of human endurance, and beyond it, for the utter destruction of all that the centuries of civilisation have built, till a ruined continent once again represents the desired peace

¹ Pp. 132-36, 140. The earlier quotation is from p. 150.

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of Europe. Mr. Nicolson says that it has been our instinctive policy for 250 years and more to watch for a ruler who dangerously o'ertops the others and then to lay him low for safety's sake. Mr. Clarence Streit² speaks of "the policy which had kept invasion from British soil," not for 250 years, but "since 1066. That," he says, "is a policy of not waiting till the conqueror comes to lay waste one's home but of going out to stop him while he is far away and relatively weak." And whatever added motives were concerned in this instance and in that, this basic reason was always there, "a durable, firm and recurrent element," as Mr. Nicolson says, "of our national destiny—a sound biological instinct, the instinct of self-preservation," requiring no other reason were it not that

The Anglo-Saxon race cannot be fired to the extremes of sacrifice and effort unless a moral motive is also present.³

It is also desirable that we should persuade ourselves, as Mr. Nicolson has persuaded himself in this war, that we ourselves were in imminent danger. So it is noted that⁴

The tiger was not merely attacking the native huts down in the village; he was fixing lustful eyes upon our own large bungalow. Hitler was out for loot. And since the British and French empires offered the richest loot in the world, it was probable, it was even certain, that in the end we also should be attacked. It is this realisation which accounts for the sudden reversal of policy after March [1939]. In a single night the British people found that their instinct of self-preservation had been aroused. It had been aroused by the realisation that Herr Hitler was not out to defend his own rights but to violate the rights of others. It was then at last that we saw that he was a menace to the world.

Yet there are few things more certain than that Hitler has dreaded more than anything else to come up against the British Empire. He tried, as many other adventurers before him have tried, what he could get short of arousing Britain's actual hostility. That she kept her word about Poland was a defeat in his gamble equally annoying and surprising to him. That he contemplated the conquest of the British Empire even in his maddest moments is merely the calculated and dishonest flight of imagination once useful on the recruiting platform (when we troubled to have recruiting meetings) and now the most

² In his book *Union Now*, p. 45, which we have to discuss later, see pp. 186 & 191 below.

³ *Why Britain Is At War*, p. 135.

⁴ The same, p. 132.

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degraded elements in our one particular brand of that poisonous product—propaganda.⁵

That this hoary invention is untrue is not a reason for our being indifferent to any other country's danger, but rather that from our vantage-ground of comparative security we should do what we could for others as Mr. Streit pleads with his own United States of America (though he even seems to have persuaded himself—as President Roosevelt has persuaded himself—that an attempt at the conquest of the Western Hemisphere is among Hitler's dreams which must be taken seriously!).

No, I prefer the reason for the war given by Sir Norman Angell⁶ to the laboured explanations of Mr. Nicolson:

This war rose because we promised to defend Poland, and proceeded to implement that promise. We gave that promise because we—France and Britain—realised that if aggression continued unchecked, we (like all Western Europe) would be at the complete mercy of an authority whose domination and sovereignty means what it has meant in Vienna and in Prague. If piecemeal destruction of lesser States by the Nazi power went on, there would be an end in Europe of the kind of life which we of the West have learned to value.

It was *our* insecurity—our diminished power—if Hitler were unchecked that was our leading motive for war (not the insecurity of “small and weak nations”)—Great Britain's insecurity not the insecurity of the Britains overseas either in the Western Hemisphere or in this, nor the defence of the “richest loot in the world” of our Dependencies.

But let us pursue that moral motive that it is desirable to have present if we are to “be fired to the extreme of sacrifice and effort” when we go to war, beyond the motive of self-defence, the instinct which, though we mostly call it “the Balance of Power,” we sometimes, “in more sentimental moments,” call “the protection of the smaller nations.” We actually declared war in obedience to our pledge to Poland, and we announced that we would not make peace till Germany has withdrawn her troops from Poland. We have not said anything like that in regard to the Russian troops. There are those who

⁵ It is not, of course, contended that once a Power found itself at war with the British Empire that Power would not attempt the injury and even the acquisition of things British: it is merely denied that any Power would seek to enter into a war for the conquest of our Empire.

⁶ *For What Do We Fight?* p. 250.

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wish we would, but I know no Pacifist, for instance, who does more than mark the obvious discrepancy, leaving the ultra-bellicose to weep about it. As Russia has in the main retaken territories only which White Russians and Ukrainians mainly inhabit, joining these with their kindred already under Russian sway, who, to the best of our knowledge, prefer and always have preferred Russian sway to Polish, there seems little if any ground for attempting to reverse the process, though a request that at a Peace Congress the rest of the world should express its approval of the transfer would be a gracious gesture on the part of Russia!

But we did not know when we went to war that Russia was going to look after her own in this way: we were concerned lest Germany, marching across prostrate Poland to conquer more *lebensraum* in Rumania and in the Balkans and in Russia itself. (An office for Ukrainian affairs was opened in Berlin in the spring of 1939.) It was this concern that led us to guarantee Poland and Rumania—before we asked Russia, who alone could make it effective, to join us in the guarantee! We were sorry about Austria and Czechoslovakia, a sorrow not itself distinguishable from our sorrow about Albania and Spain and Ethiopia and China. But it had become time to be more than sorry about Poland. Our “vital interests” were at last in jeopardy. History will decide whether this decision was a happy one for Poland—or for Rumania, who has been similarly carved up in spite of our guarantee.

Though Poland's restoration as a nation at Versailles was a first fruit of President Wilson's belief in self-determination, none of the revived or enlarged States that saw the light in 1919 contained as many inhabitants of alien race. Of the total population at 1925 of some 27,000,000, 9,000,000 were non-Polish. There were areas of inextricable ethnological confusion, but of the 3,883,000 Ruthenians (Ukrainians), the 1,057,000 White Russians and the 72,000 Lithuanians an enormous majority lived east of the Curzon Line and with the help of anti-Bolshevik Allied statesmen Poland defiantly acquired this territory at the expense of a neighbour much larger and more powerful than she could ever be herself. Mr. L. P. Mair, in his careful examination of the first eight years' working of the Minorities Treaties, and of the League Council's long struggles with the Polish Government, truly remarks⁷ that

⁷ *The Protection of Minorities* (Christophers), p. 18.

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Oppressed and discontented minorities turn naturally for sympathy to their own people across the border; or their protection affords to some Power with aggressive intentions a pretext for a "righteous war."

Poland's two great neighbours have seized the pretext.

Again, as has been shown,⁸ the settlement regarding an outlet to the sea—Danzig and the Corridor—was known to need revision; moreover, the Allied promises to the Ruthenians of East Galicia to the south remained unfulfilled. The whole position was as unstable as it could have been—can it ever possibly be made stable?—a confessed loose end in the labours, good and bad, of the Peace Conference based on the principles of self-determination and Collective guaranteed Security. The case of Poland alone was manifestly enough to overstrain any such system. But still for twenty years nothing was done about it. What a case to go to war about—for "young men not yet dead," not yet trained for slaughter, to die for!

Some three weeks after the beginning of this war, on September 20th, Mr. Chamberlain said in the House of Commons,

His Majesty's Government did not seek this war. They did, as the published documents show, repeatedly state their readiness for a peaceful settlement by negotiation. They persevered in their attempts to secure this up to and even after the striking of the first blow, but their efforts were set at naught, and their hopes shattered, by the unprovoked and brutal aggression of Germany on our Polish Allies.

History will have to decide whether more, and what more, should have been done. Were pleas to Hitler enough, backed by assurances that the pledge to Poland would be carried out? Were we overconfident that in face of these Hitler would reconsider his obvious purposes? What more *could* have been done? Was the guarantee to Poland too categorical—too all-embracing? Hitler's dates are wrong when he accuses us of stiffening by our guarantee the back of the Polish Government and encouraging it to refuse the German "proposals." Our guarantee was given after the reply had been sent—but it was in the offing and might well have had something of the alleged effect. Poland did make alternative suggestions, which Hitler chose to treat as not worth consideration, but the whole thing was manifestly too casual for so grave a moment in history.

And could Russia have been saved for our side? As we have seen, on March 17, 1938, the Soviet Government proposed that French,

⁸ See pp. 158-60 above.

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Soviet, American and British statesmen should meet together to see what could be done collectively to prevent further aggression, particularly in Central Europe. In a statement made in Moscow, M. Litvinoff, then still the Soviet Foreign Minister, said:

. . . The present international situation places before all peace-loving States, and the Great Powers in particular, the question of their responsibility for the destinies of its peoples of Europe, and not only Europe. The Soviet Government being cognisant of the share of this responsibility . . . is ready as before to participate in collective actions which would be decided upon jointly with it and which would aim at checking the further development of aggression and at eliminating the increased danger of a new world massacre.

It is prepared immediately to take up in the League of Nations or outside of it the discussion with other Powers of the practical measures which the circumstances demand. It may be too late to-morrow, but to-day the time for it has not yet gone if all the States and the Great Powers in particular take a firm and unambiguous stand in regard to the problem of the collective salvation of peace.

The view of the British Government in regard to the Soviet proposals was declared by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on March 24th. Mr. Chamberlain said that the object of the proposal would "appear to be to negotiate . . . mutual undertakings in advance to resist aggression, which . . . His Majesty's Government for their part are unwilling to accept." They were also of the opinion that the action proposed would tend "to aggravate the tendency towards the establishment of exclusive groups of nations which must . . . be inimicable to the prospects of European peace." Ultimately he was driven to depend on an Anglo-French guarantee—obviously inadequate for the purpose—in the absence of any such conference. "Leave it to me," seemed to be his rule of life in these tremendous times, and then belatedly tried for a "Peace Front"—not by conference but by secret diplomacy.

Even at that stage Russia still realised—as how could she not?—that she and we were alike interested in the foiling of Hitler's mad ambitions. She showed her willingness to help us to guarantee the countries we were "interested in" if we would help her to guarantee the countries she was interested in, including Poland itself. But the frenzied hatred of the Communist Power among certain British politicians prompted a policy, shall we say, of backwardness and Russia was driven back on her only alternative policy. This may fairly be

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described as a promise to Germany of Russian neutrality if Germany would keep to the west of the Curzon Line, enabling Russia to take her share of Poland in a new partition and to guarantee the Baltic States against German aggression by dominating them herself. This was cynical and shocking, of course, but our Fascists are hardly entitled to lead in the denunciation of her taking the wrong turning after they had prevented her from taking the right one.

Supposing there *had* been an open Conference to which all had been invited and an agreed policy at the end of it? Would not that have resulted in greater pressure than the dual threat and the earnest monologues from London? Might it not, surely, have proved an overwhelming pressure, moral and material? We do not know. But such steps should not have been left untried when an ultimatum was in contemplation.

One who reviewed Sir Edward Grey's diplomacy in June-July 1914 felt that he did all that could be done in the crisis. The reviewer of Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy before September 1939—and Mr. Chamberlain had more time than had Grey—has a feeling that he had hardly got into his stride when the end came.

We certainly did not help Czechoslovakia: did we really help Poland? Are we really helping Poland now? Does the demand that Hitler should go—to please us, not to please Germany—help either? Has our notice to quit daunted—or rallied—his followers? Would the position have been appreciably worse if we had not gone into the fray and had left Hitler to his exhausted—and exasperated—people, while organising world opinion for a revision when the opportunity arrived?

It was already patent to all the world during those first eight months of the war that something had gone badly wrong even from the point of view of the believers in the power of force to solve moral and political problems. Why did things lag? Why did both sides hang back from the full-blooded prosecution of the war? Could it have been because either side was not sufficiently sure of its aims or of how far greater slaughter could secure them? The only calculable thing about the war was the cost its full-blooded prosecution would involve. Was the game worth the candle? Millions in Europe and out of it far beyond the ranks of the Pacifists—who know that no good things come out of war—were asking these questions. Might we not yet see the neutrals, who see most of the game, led by the United States,

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summon the combatants to join them at the council table in the name of the threatened civilisation of the world—with a moral authority not to be resisted—and their heralds striking up our swords as did Idæus and his colleague when Ajax and Hector were engaged in an equally useless contest?

But then came the *blitzkrieg*.

CHAPTER XXVII

Britain's Next "Offensive"

After Russia had entrenched herself round the Gulf of Finland, which we were too late to resist, and Germany had entrenched herself on both sides of the Skagerrak, which we unsuccessfully tried to resist, the real business began—on the historic Western Front. But what a different Western Front from that of 1914-18! As a preliminary Holland was overrun in four days and Belgium in eighteen days. And then, most amazing of all, France surrendered to the conqueror after another eighteen days of his undivided attention to her conquest, and the British Commonwealth was left to fight alone against Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy—the Italy which stepped in just in time to take part in the dictation of terms to France but too late to make it necessary to fight France for that privilege. Quite obviously the successive collapses were precipitated by lack of cohesion among the conquered. The black curtains of the war and of the occupation deprive us of any sure knowledge of the position economically and politically in the occupied territories. What proportion of those Frenchmen still in France support Pétain—or Laval—in their attempted collaboration with Hitler and Mussolini in establishing Authoritarian Government in France and what proportion looks to General de Gaulle and Britain to restore the Third Republic, we may not know till a much later stage.

Meanwhile, the Siege of Britain proceeds with fluctuating severity and our Air Force operates with no effective resistance in Germany, in Germany's conquered territory, in Italy and—with our Army and Navy—in her African possessions. We are left guessing whether we have yet experienced the worst that Hitler can do or has planned for this island. We must wait and see. Having got so far in our experience of modern war it may be well to recall the appalling forecast of it given, for instance, by Lord Cecil in 1933:¹

In 1918, man had powers of destruction that were incomparably greater than those available in 1914, when the war began; and the

¹ In *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War*, pp. 267, 268.

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war services had not yet actually tried some of their most appalling marvels when the Armistice was concluded. Since that time, the science of massacre has made extraordinary strides. The destructive power of the air weapon has increased—so the experts have told us—by several hundredfold. And in an air attack on a city on a cloudy night, the advantage is so overwhelmingly with the attacker that no effectual defence is possible. Millions of pounds have been spent by Governments in perfecting the means of wholesale poisoning, suffocating and burning.

The mechanisation of war on land has resulted in the creating of tanks which can move at great speed, and can cross trenches and jump and almost swim: a single submarine may now have a tonnage of 3,000 tons, with an immense radius of action, and the type of submarines which inflicted such enormous damage on the world's shipping, especially in 1917, has been completely outclassed.

There is, I believe, a strong probability that resolute air attack could inflict casualties in the London area alone amounting to millions of lives in a single night, and according to some authorities this nation's importation of food could be so blocked by air attack as to bring a quickly fatal breakdown of supplies.

There can be no final verdict on the accuracy of the forecast yet awhile. The most we can do, even after the night of December 29th, is to hazard the inference that the power and effectiveness of the defence against air attack has developed more rapidly than was expected.

No one here believes that Hitler can succeed in this his latest enterprise. On the contrary we believe that it will be definitely defeated, and the intervals between our resorts to public "shelters" or descents to our own cellars or their equivalents or defiantly sleeping on in our beds, we are already questioning as to just what Mr. Churchill means when he forecasts a new Expeditionary Force for the invasion and conquest of Hitler's Europe and the emancipation of the conquered peoples. The nearer we come to it the more gravely we shall realise the vast issues the proposal raises. We cannot tell how thorough and how detailed Governmental thinking on the matter has been so far. It is certain that outside Governmental circles the thinking is only just beginning.

First of all let us face the position as between Hitler with his Nazis and the Fascists, Italian and French, on the one hand and Britain on the other. We are in the midst of a winter of continued blackading of the whole of Hitler's Europe. We may tell Hitler's Europe, and may quite sincerely believe, that Hitler could feed it if he chose instead of seizing all foodstuffs for his troops, and this may—or may not—be

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believed. Mothers of dying children² may—or may not—believe it. But our fleet under our instructions will do its best to prevent any other food from reaching them. That, necessarily, is how Hitler's Europe must see it, even though they did sing "God save the King" on Armistice Day in Paris.

We shall tell them (believing it) that our fleet is doing that in order to secure their release from tyranny. Suppose Hitler's Europe says it prefers Hitler's tyranny to our invasion, carrying war back to its stricken countryside and cities? Supposing Hitler's Europe asks us how we propose to secure and sustain its freedom? Suppose it asks, "How do we know that a world under British Imperialism"—whatever that may mean—"would be so much better than under Nazi or Fascist Imperialism as to be worth the renewed horrors of invasion? You refuse to free India: how do we know that if you reconquer Hitler's Europe you will not hold us down as you hold India?"

Perhaps we get indignant at this stage of the catechism and merely answer sharply that "our propaganda will put all that right," that we are a Commonwealth and no longer an Empire practising "Imperialism," and that we are doing our best to solve a very complicated problem in India? Hitler's Europe is already fed up with propaganda and finds it an insufficient substitute for bread. How are we to convince Hitler's Europe of our sincerity and disinterestedness—the sincerity and disinterestedness of a country which would challenge Hitler (or so its Prime Minister declared³) only when its own vital interests were thought to be in danger? We promise India constitutional freedom—after the war, after we have freed Hitler's Europe, not seeing that whatever we do in democratising India *now* would at one stroke do more to establish our *bona fides* in wishing to free Hitler's Europe than by landing any number of army corps on the other side

² Here is a typical example of the unforeseen results of a general blockade. It is from *The Times* of October 14, 1940: "Professor Macheboeuf (Rockefeller Fellow and Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Bordeaux) and Professor Chevalier at Marseilles, who are scientific advisers to the Vichy Ministry of Agriculture and Food, have warned Marshal Pétain in a report that, unless vitamin 'A' in the form of cod-liver oil or halibut oil can be brought from America before January, three-quarters of all the children of France will be in danger of death from malnutrition or from enhanced sensitivity to infectious diseases. The critical time, they say, will be March, when the children's resistance will be at its lowest and the French food reserves nearest to exhaustion. The British blockade, they say, has resulted in the seizure of the French cod fishing fleet of Newfoundland. The report confirms the survey of American Quakers and American Red Cross experts." See, however, postscript to Foreword.

³ See p. 135 above.

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of the Channel and the North Sea. Fascist Spain, Fascist France, Fascist Belgium—perhaps Fascist Austria, Fascist Bohemia and Moravia—it is muttered in Hitler's Europe—each betrayed its country and allowed Hitler to destroy its freedom. What of Fascist England—at Munich, for instance? We have not been forgiven for Munich in Hitler's Europe. Is England even now, asks Hitler's Europe, seeking anything else than her own vital interests—her interest in being the most powerful country in Europe?

Thousands fleeing from Hitler's tyranny came to England. We tested their *bona fides* by the most rigorous investigation of their antecedents. Germans, resident and refugee, who seemed to be in sympathy with Hitler, we imprisoned (Class A). We restricted the liberty of those who were doubtful (Class B). Those who were obviously hostile to Hitler and friendly to us we gave complete freedom (Class C). Then, over night, we reversed our policy and at the behest of the War Office we interned the lot—A, B and C—in internment camps which had not been prepared for their reception. Starvation, illness and even suicide followed. These are cold facts, however we explain them, and we expect the friends of these refugees in the places they come from to believe that we stand for liberation from tyranny—as, on our souls, we still do stand.

However that may be, the impulse merely to get our own back on Hitler without a very clear conviction that our presence on the Continent is good for the Continent, and very clear-cut reasons for that conviction, will not create the virtually unanimous support of this country which is essential to such an enterprise after all we have gone through and risked. That part of the nation—so large a part of the thinking people in it—which successively (1) supported "sanctions" as a last resort in defence of Collective Security, (2) doubted the wisdom of going to war almost without allies for the recovery of Polish integrity, (3) agreed that France, Holland and Belgium must be defended from invasion, and (4) agreed that the invasion of Britain could not but be resisted,⁴ would be utterly divided by the proposal to carry the war to the Continent again for any reasons so far officially avowed.

An Expeditionary Force will prove useless, even impossible, if not accompanied by a convincing campaign of propaganda (it is a pity

⁴ Even the most extreme Pacifists agreed that the resolve to resist invasion commanded respect and (in many cases) approval.

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that a better word than this flyblown one is not available) showing just how we propose to release Hitler's Europe (including Hitler's Germany⁵) and for what. And the object described must be such as is obviously disinterested, and as obviously attainable, and is without a doubt universally disinterested—materially, intellectually and spiritually. And the first thing to do, as a preliminary to constructing such a campaign of propaganda, is to come to an understanding with responsible people in India as to what can be granted *now* and at what date the next step can be taken and the ultimate goal, showing indisputably that we really do believe in freedom not only for ourselves and for those whose freedom suits us but for other people irrespective of our supposed national interests. And the first step, just as obviously, is to release all Class C men and women and to ask their advice and help in carrying through the new propaganda campaign, giving them whatever facilities we can to get into touch with those of like mind still within Hitler's Europe.

No timid, half-hearted proposals are any good at all at this crisis in European history. We are proud that we alone are left to resist and overthrow Nazism and Fascism (and the risk of Bolshevism too, if you will). Nothing can do that now but the exact opposite of them. That exact opposite is enshrined in the momentous historic documents, from Magna Carta onwards, British, French and American, and is summarised in three words still engraved on French public

⁵ "Most of the followers of the old Catholic parties in Germany, the Centre and the Bavarian People's Party, have joined the Nazis. They have submitted for many years now to Hitler's orders, but they have never ceased to work against him. . . . Some are members of the Gestapo, but even in wartime they keep in touch with the emigrants from their ranks. Others wear the uniforms of German officers, but they are waiting only for a signal to turn their regiments against the Nazis. They sit in party offices, but they faithfully report happenings in their sphere to the leaders of the German political Catholic movement who live abroad. They work slowly but persistently. They avoid attention but they build a basis for the future. Do you remember the Catholic Youth Organisations? . . . One could give instances of the unchangeable spirit which to-day, after seven years, fills these men and boys. When the time comes they will speak for themselves. So will the German workers, united in cells of six or eight, who cling still to their Socialist convictions. . . . The German Socialists work quietly to organise and extend their units. . . . German Trade Unionists keep British leaders informed about the spark of freedom which still lives in Germany. One day they may kindle this spark and it will burst into a huge flame. . . . I am convinced that the day will come when neither S.S. nor Gestapo can hold the German people down any longer. . . . It will be a cruel and sweeping revolution, bloody and long drawn out. I can see it happening in conjunction with the war as soon as it is brought to Hitler's and the German people's doorsteps".—*The Nazis at War*, by Willi Frischauer (Victor Gollancz), pp. 126-30, 271, 272.

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buildings—unless Nazi chisels have been busy—Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. The first blow at Hitlerism, as H. G. Wells and others have seen, is not an Expeditionary Force—force can achieve *nothing*—but a new Declaration of the Rights of Man and its universal dissemination. And the second is an invitation to all the nations to join in a Federation in which these rights are universally conceded and practised, democratically governed, within which no “municipal” land, sea or air forces are tolerated and in which the only force, if force there must be, is wielded by the democratically controlled Federal Government for the equal safety of all its members.

See how convincingly Britain and her Commonwealth could offer (1) a common citizenship, (2) pooled currency and credit, and with these (3) free trade and (4) equal access to all food and raw materials in British Possessions with the possessions of all other members, (5) equal control, through the democratically controlled Federal Government, of the British and all other federated fleets and their bases throughout the world, (6) control of land, sea and air communications.

If we did this it would be universally admitted that we were “talking to some effect” and it would be the only “talk” that has a chance against Hitler’s kind of Federation now in actual existence from the Vistula to the Bay of Biscay. It would be “talk” that could be converted into facts as each nation threw off the Hitler yoke. And for the British Commonwealth it would be the kind of “giving”—on an immense scale—that brings a return incomparably greater than the gift.

CHAPTER XXVIII

“Sovereignty,” the Arch-Enemy of Peace

It is extraordinarily interesting (and of the first importance) to trace how the fruitful idea of Federation in the sense suggested in the last chapter gradually grew from a study of the failure of Collective Security under the League—successive failures directly attributable to the pernicious doctrine of Sovereignty which so cunningly entrenched itself in the very citadel of Internationalism—at Geneva.

Under the Covenant, States might voluntarily cast into the pool this or that function of sovereignty for common administration, subject always to their own “ratification” at every stage. But an intimation that this or that proposal in Council or Assembly was an infringement of any country’s sovereignty dictated a precipitate retreat by Council and Assembly alike—especially precipitate if the country happened to be a Great Power. There were post-war alliances the significance of whose origin came wholly from the war, the members of which watched over each other’s sovereign rights, and there was an inner ring of Great Powers tacitly bound to see that the new system did not press disrespectfully hard on any of their members.¹ Mr. de Madariaga, it is true, has an impressive analysis² of the extent to which post-war conditions have driven out Sovereignty from many national activities in which, when the world was larger, it reigned supreme, and to which the League has helped the process; but there are many others in which it has manifestly stood in the way of progress in the common good.

Mr. L. S. Woolf, in summing up his two reports on *International Government*³ for the Fabian Research Department, puts it in this way:

In the international community the desire to manage one’s own affairs in national communities and States, the desire for independence,

¹ “The case, as drawn on the paper, is quite clear. Such a fact is evident, such a clause obviously applies. But nothing happens, or if something does happen, it is not what the system had led us to expect. A kind of collaboration sets in between the principles of the system and the realities of life, until at times it looks almost as if the aggressor were asking the League advice as to how best to bring his breach of the Covenant to a successful issue, and the League asking the aggressor’s opinion as to which sanctions he would prefer to undergo.”—Salvador de Madariaga, in *The World’s Design*, p. 154.

² The same, pp. 47–69.

³ George Allen & Unwin, pp. 349–52.

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the ties and passions of nationality, will, of course, continue to exist. That they can be among the noblest of human feelings and instincts and productive of great good no sane man will deny.

But he claims to have shown

that they are not incompatible with a highly organised system of International Government, and that they do not require for their existence the independence of government which the lawyer and the diplomatist pretend is essential to the independent sovereign State. . . . The enormous benefit which would result from such International Government may be realised from the sardonic thought that its establishment would imply the recognition by statesmen and Foreign Offices that the aim and end of foreign policy and offices should be international co-operation.

And Lord Lothian said,⁴ before he became the British Ambassador at Washington,

The Covenant of the League of Nations disguises but does not end anarchy, because, while it is a contract to co-operate, it leaves intact the root of anarchy, national Sovereignty. It has been Sovereignty which at bottom has prevented a liberal and timely revision of out-of-date treaties, which has driven the nations to a disastrous degree of economic nationalism, which has prevented any effective system of Collective Security, and which has led to rearmament as the means to international change and to the return of the alliance system. . . .

Anarchy cannot be ended by any system of co-operation between sovereign nations but only by the application of the principle of federal union. . . . That principle is the only one which can end competitive armaments and war and remove the economic causes of poverty and unemployment in the modern world.

As long ago as the World War itself (in 1915) the late J. A. Hobson warned League of Nations builders⁵ that

Peace cannot be secured by adopting a purely static view of the needs and rights of nations in relation to one another. New applications of the principles of political "autonomy" and of "the open door" will become necessary, and some international method of dealing with them is essential. So there emerges the necessity of extending the idea of a League of Peace into that of an International Government. . . .

The new era of internationalism requires the replacement of the secret diplomacy of Powers by the public intercourse of Peoples through their chosen representatives. If the Peace which ends this war is to be durable, it must be of a kind to facilitate the setting-up of these new

⁴ In *The Ending of Armageddon* (Federal Union), pp. 4, 5.

⁵ *Towards International Government* (George Allen & Unwin), pp. 6, 7, 164.

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international arrangements. No timid, tentative quarter measures will suffice. Courage and faith are needed for a great new extension of the art of government. . . .

Genuine international policy requires that the interests, capacities and needs, not of sovereign States, but of peoples, shall prevail.

But the League of Nations that followed was a league of sovereign State Governments and not a League of Peoples. Mr. de Madariaga pointed out twenty-two years later⁶ that

It is precisely in the rapid evolution of the world towards a world-city and a world-market, with a unity of its own, that the problem lies; or rather in the fact that while circumstances and the trend of history have united the world, its political and economic machinery has remained adapted to the old ways of free national rivalry and free economic competition. . . . From the economic point of view the world has attained the unity of the market-place. All happenings are discussed in it as they affect the whole of the village. But there remain within this unit upwards of sixty factions, known as nations, which are unable to put the general interest above their own factional interests. . . .

The ethical principles which stand at the basis of the Covenant are too strong for any nation publicly to abjure them. The United States does not. . . . The Covenant for us is not a document which diplomats sign and seal and parliaments ratify and statesmen violate, nor a doctrine which jurists water down and politicians spill; it is a living thing, the source of which it is beyond diplomats, parliaments, jurists and politicians to check or divert, still less to conquer.

But

Most nations do not see in the League an institution ripe enough, world-minded enough, to trust it with the handling of a kind of collective sovereignty. . . . Most so-called responsible persons in great nations live under the tacit or expressed assumption that the League amounts to machinery for governing small nations, it being understood that big nations govern themselves—and others. . . . Such is the first cause of distrust in the League. Shrewd people in second and third rank powers feel that its laws are not universal, but framed only for keeping small nations in their place. The League, theoretically an international body, is in practice the market-place of internationalisms.

And again⁷

Individual liberty must remain intact in all that pertains to the relations between the world-citizen and the world-State. It is foolish to speak of a super-State, but it is foolish not to see that a world-State

⁶ *The World's Design*, pp. xv, xvi, 19, 21, 26, 27.

⁷ In the same author's *Anarchy and Hierarchy* (George Allen & Unwin), p. 143.

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has become necessary, indeed that it already exists. . . . The national State cannot overstep the limits fixed for it by the higher relation which unites man to man, higher though, may be, looser than that which unites citizen to citizen, just as the relation of man to mankind is higher, though perhaps less intense, than patriotism.

This was written in 1936 and what preceded it in 1937. Then "after the September that reeled from Nuremberg through Berchtesgaden and Godesberg to end at Munich," came the book of the American journalist, Mr. Clarence K. Streit, *Union Now*,⁸ saying

I believe there is a way through these dangers, and out of the dilemma, a way to do what we all want, to keep both peace and freedom, and keep them securely and be done with this nightmare. . . . The way through [said he] is Union now of the democracies that the North Atlantic and a thousand other things already unite—Union of these few peoples in a great federal republic built on and for the thing they share most, their common democratic principle of government for the sake of individual freedom.

This Union would be designed (a) to provide effective common government in our democratic world in those fields where such common governments will clearly serve man's freedom better than separate government, (b) to maintain independent national governments in all other fields where such government will best serve man's freedom, and (c) to create by its constitution a nucleus world government capable of growing into universal world government peacefully and as rapidly as such growth will best serve man's freedom.

Like all the rest, Mr. Streit sees national sovereignty as the dragon which bars the world's path to peace.⁹

To follow this way through now [the uniting of the North American States in 1789], our democracies have only to abandon in their turn the heresy into which they have fallen, the heresy of absolute national sovereignty and its vain alternatives, neutrality, Balance of Power alliance or League of Nations. We have only to cease sacrificing needlessly our individual freedom to the freedom of our nations, be true to democratic philosophy and establish that "more perfect Union" towards which all our existing unions explicitly or implicitly aim.

Sir Arthur Salter, writing before Mr. Streit's book was published, though his views did not see the light till just after those of Mr. Streit, similarly recognised, as a main obstacle contributing to the final arrest of progress by the League along the right lines of development, "the strictly inter-State character" of its constitution:¹⁰

⁸ Jonathan Cape, March 1939, pp. 17, 18.

⁹ The same, p. 21.

¹⁰ *Security*, pp. 135, 136.

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The willingness of a nation to submit the free exercise of sovereign rights to some restriction by an international authority becomes sensibly less as it passes through the medium of those who actively wield power in the States, whether as ministers or officials. The jealous love of power by those who exercise it personally adds a human factor of a strength and importance only known to those who have observed its effects at close quarters. Under the League's constitution, which gives expression to the international only through the inter-State principle, surrenders or restrictions of sovereign liberty of action are voted not by people but by Governments.

The difference is an important one. It is recognised, for example, in such a true federal system as that of the U.S.A., which in order to counteract it provides that the members both of the House of Representatives and (since 1913) even in the Senate shall not be appointed by the State Governments but elected by the people. . . .

In retrospect, perhaps, we may consider that it would have been well from the beginning to find a form of expression for world opinion of the League Constitution itself on a principle similar to that embodied in the Constitution of the U.S.A.

After he had seen Mr. Streit's book, Sir Arthur added (*inter alia*):¹¹

I, like him, desire a form of world government which is based upon a greater surrender of national sovereignty than the “inter-State” constitution of the League of Nations. . . . This has been the aspect of the League of Nations, and this the ultimate goal, which, as far as I am concerned, has always had my deepest and ultimate loyalty, and I believe that the same is true of many of those who have been among the most ardent of the supporters of the League of Nations.

Since then the society named “Federal Union” has been started and now, I believe, has a membership of more than ten thousand. In the American *Union Now Bulletin* it is claimed that “from two to six million U.S. voters are in favour of some form of Union at the present time,” though “only a small fraction of that number are members of I.F.U.”—Inter-democracy Federal Union. There is also a society in France and in most of the British Dominions. *The Case for Federal Union*, written by Mr. W. B. Curry, has been published as a “Penguin Special,” and there is *Federal Europe*, by the Union's present Secretary, Mr. R. W. C. Mackay.

There are now many other books both attacking the doctrine of State Sovereignty and proposing various systems of Federation. There is the symposium edited by Mr. Channing-Pearce entitled *Federal Union*

¹¹ The same, p. 141.

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(Jonathan Cape), including contributions from "such authorities as Mr. Edward Mousley, Professors Lionel Robbins, G. W. Keeton and L. W. Grensted, Dr. Ivor Jennings, Dr. G. Schwarzenberger, Dr. William Brown, Dr. L. P. Jacks, Dr. Maxwell Garnett, Dr. Olaf Stapledon, Mr. J. B. Priestley, Mr. Horsfall Carter, Mr. W. B. Curry, Mr. Wickham Steed, Miss Storm Jameson and (the late) Miss Grace Hadow."

The book is intended to be a clearing-house of informed opinion concerning the project and principles of "Federal Union." . . . Although it is in no sense an official statement of opinion of the Federal Union movement, and by no means all its contributors have come from its adherents and some are its avowed critics, it is to the adherents and the critics of Federal Union that it is primarily addressed.

Mr. D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P., writes *Federal Illusion? An Examination of the Proposals for Federal Union* (Frederick Muller), claiming that

The conclusion is inescapable that Federal Union in any guise cannot be established as a reality within the limits of the existing economic structure, either now or in any reasonably near future, and that if it were to be established it would not advance the cause of permanent peace. . . . That must be won, and can only be won, by eliminating the causes of war by Socialism and by Socialism alone.

Then there is *A Federation for Western Europe* by Dr. Ivor Jennings (Cambridge University Press):

This book faces *facts*; on this basis the author has prepared a Draft Constitution for a Federation of Western Europe. He is a distinguished constitutional lawyer. He thinks it would work. What do you think?

But the most destructive analysis and constructive synthesis comes from the copious pen of Mr. H. G. Wells.¹² In *The New World Order*¹³

¹² Mr. Wells's contemptuous and persistent attacks on the society called "Federal Union" (a prefixed article "The" inconveniently omitted from its title) are not worthy of him. In his latest "Penguin" (see p. 193 below) he at first half apologises ("It appears associated with some extremely misleading and preposterous schemes: their mental quality aroused a sort of contemptuous dislike in me, and in my desire to make my objections emphatic, I may have struck at ideas outside the definite target at which I aimed") and then devotes a whole chapter to "the puerility of current Federal Union schemes." Federal Union (the society) is avowedly a union of all who believe or are interested in the idea, uncommitted to any particular scheme, and it is doing good work in promoting exploration. In the pamphlet *How We Shall Win*, it combines the idea with Mr. Wells's own idea of a manifesto on "The Rights of Man" on the lines here adopted in Chapter XXVII—again without any specific detailed proposals.

¹³ Secker and Warburg, pp. 9, 17, 18.

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He sets forth "the things we *must* do and the price we *must* pay for the world peace if we really intend to achieve it, beginning with the sweeping statement that

It is the system of national individualism and un-co-ordinated enterprise that is the world's disease, and it is the whole system that has to go. It has to be reconditioned down to its foundations or replaced. It cannot hope to "muddle through" amiably, wastefully and dangerously a second time. . . . We are living in a phase of human life which may lead either to a new way of living for our species or else to a longer or briefer dégringolade of violence, misery, destruction, death and the extinction of mankind.

CHAPTER XXIX

Federation at Once or Piecemeal?

The great importance to be attributed to the impressive indictment of the doctrine of National Sovereignty in the last chapter is apparent even from the most casual analysis of the causes of war in recent history. They were almost all inherent not in differences of outlook, of temperament or of fundamental interests, but in the differences actually *caused* by the clashings of National Sovereignty which in their turn prompted their settlement by conflict instead of by civil process. National Sovereignty, that is, inevitably means international anarchy with war as the natural and surely looked-for result. The League of Nations and its founders took some essential steps to combat international anarchy, for which we should be eternally grateful, but those who have used it used it for the entrenchment of National Sovereignty as if it were the very ark of the covenant—were leading their forces in the diametrically wrong direction. The new covenant must aim at the abolition, whether at once or by stages, of the right to go-as-you-please-anarchy of the nations—both great and small.

Mr. de Madariaga would proceed by stages:¹

A number of world institutions are overdue, so much so that, under the mere pressure of events, wiser by far than human beings, a still reluctant world has had to set up some of them, though in an imperfect and half-hearted way. The League of Nations, the International Labour Office and the World Court are the first examples which come to the mind; but there is also the Bank of International Settlements, an apology for a World Bank.

The Bank of International Settlements should be reconstructed in order to prepare it gradually for its future work as the Central Bank of Central Banks. It must become a real World Bank, and act as: (1) the clearing-house for the balance of payments of the nations; (2) the central market for borrowers and lenders where capital may be found free from political leading strings; (3) the adviser in technical and financial matters for any nation that may wish to seek such advice without having to surrender any political or economic autonomy; (4) the stabilisation of the movements of exchange so that currencies may, politics permitting, gradually evolve towards sanity; (5) the

¹ *World's Design*, pp. 250-52.

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laboratory in which the theoretical and practical conditions for a world currency may be slowly studied and perhaps evolved. . . .

With the same blend of boldness in conception, sincerity in intention and prudence in execution, other world institutions might be contemplated and studied. The first that occurs to the mind is a World Trade Commission. The present tariff chaos must come to an end or bring the world to an end. . . . A World Trade Commission, appointed without governmental strings, should be set up, with powers defined in such a way as to enable it to influence legislation and opinion by its moral authority.

As an indication of what is meant, these powers might include: (1) that of reporting periodically in the Council and Assembly of the League on the effects of existing legislation on world trade; (2) that of advising the World Court on any conflict which might arise between nations as to tariffs and treaties of commerce; (3) that of suggesting legislation to remedy defective tariff situations which might lead to ill-feeling or war; (4) that of advising national legislating authorities at their request as to forthcoming or existing tariff laws.

A World Trading Commission might grow into an invaluable institution for suggesting the most adequate distribution of production over the world in order to reduce overlapping, over-production, under-production and needless transportation.

Mr. Clarence Streit, of course, would leap, on the other hand, to the degree of Federation he believes attainable *now*.²

In the founder democracies I would include at least these fifteen (or ten): The American Union, the British Commonwealth (specifically the United Kingdom, the Federal Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Ireland), the French Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Swiss Confederation, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. . . .

These few democracies suffice to provide the nucleus of world government with the financial, monetary, economic and political power necessary both to assure peace to its members peacefully from the outset by sheer overwhelming preponderance and invulnerability, and practically to end the monetary insecurity and economic warfare now ravaging the whole world. These few divide among them such wealth and power that the so-called world political, economic and monetary anarchy is at bottom nothing but their own anarchy—since to end it they need only unite in establishing law and order among themselves. . . .

This union [as has already been said] would provide common government in those fields where such common government will serve man's freedom better than separate governments, i.e. the Union

² *Union Now*, pp. 18, 19, 24, 25.

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of the North Atlantic democracies in these five fields: a union citizenship, a union defence force, a union customs-free economy, a union money, a union postal and communications system. . . .

The Great Republic would be organised with a view to its spreading peacefully round the earth as nations grew ripe for it. Its Constitution would aim clearly at achieving eventually by this peaceful, ripening, natural method the goal millions have dreamed of individually but never sought to get by deliberately planning and patiently working together to achieve it. That goal would be achieved by Union when every individual of our species would be a citizen of it, a citizen of a disarmed world enjoying world free trade, a world money and a world communications system. Then Man's vast future would begin.

Sir Arthur Salter says:³

I agree completely with Mr. Streit, as I have long done on this point with Lord Lothian and Mr. H. G. Wells, that what is ultimately needed is a form of international Government which will, on a few but essential matters (of which the most important are defence and the conditions under which international trade is carried on), take over the sovereign rights of separate States as the inter-State system of the League does not do. The ultimate goal being the same, the question is one of method. Should we aim at proceeding step by step, or attempt a bold jump to our ultimate objective at once? . . .

Experience, as Mr. Streit argues, may suggest that anything less than federation will be insufficient; but it surely suggests more strongly that we cannot expect to get so much as he desires at once. . . . But there are, of course, occasions when a jump is safer than a step, and when the very gravity of the peril may give us a sudden access of strength beyond what we thought we possessed. It may be so.

It may be so, and perhaps the peace settlement after a second war-to-end-war may be felt to be such an occasion. The war was only in the offing when Sir Arthur wrote.

Mr. Wells, of course, thinks Mr. Streit's proposals vitiated by their purely political outlook, ignoring the need of the establishment of world "collectivisation" if the world is to be saved, but you are to note that the world communism Mr. Wells advocates is not the communism of Marx or the dictatorship of the proletariat of Lenin but a communism to which all classes and all talents can contribute. One does not gather that he quarrels with Mr. Streit for being in a hurry: he merely thinks that a revolution more or less along Mr. Streit's lines will take a much longer time. But he surmises that "it may be possible so to search, ransack and rationalise the Streit project as to make a

³ *Security*, pp. 142, 143.

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genuine and workable scheme for the socialisation of the world.”⁴ Incidentally, he unkindly points out that Mr. Streit’s model Federation, the U.S.A., “produced one of the bloodiest civil wars in all history.”

In his “Penguin” book, *The Common Sense of War and Peace*,⁵ Mr. Wells advocates what he calls “War-Welded Federalism” somewhat similar to the agreements of Allies and Neutrals in the last war and in this for the rationing of food and raw materials:

Unless this break-up of the world into a slaughter scramble is to go on indefinitely, there must be an effective disarmament commission, a reparations commission, an international commission for the restoration of the displaced populations, an air and general transport commission and a commission for the restoration of production by some readjustment of money and barter, all in operation quite soon. Their work, once it begins, may stretch over years. . . .

And no simple treaties or conventions will meet the case. There will be no more treaties because there is no more good faith. Germany has killed that for ever. The air commission must be a commission with full powers, a world air police. All over the world reasonable people and common people will be in favour of that. . . . And once we federate so far as the air goes, we can add other world commissions quite easily to the bundle of delegated powers. All that, we can get out of a properly conditioned *and previously discussed and formulated* Armistice. We can get it in no other way. So I take it that is the way things will have to go.

Mr. J. A. Hobson, writing during the Great War, was a whole-hogger like Mr. Streit, though both more detailed and more cautious. He called for⁶

an action requiring great faith and courage, viz. the creation of a permanent International Council, elected by the constituent nations. . . . Why should not the nations which desire to secure peace and to support public law be assumed to be willing and capable of making such surrender of national individualism or absolute Sovereignty as would undoubtedly be involved in setting up an authoritative elective Council with full powers to make and interpret international relations in conformity with considerations of the general welfare?

A year later, in *Democracy After the War*, Mr. Hobson said:⁷

It is of grave importance that the traditions of the bad statecraft of the past should be scrapped and that the effective relations between

⁴ *The New World Order*, p. 90.

⁵ Pp. 58, 59.

⁶ *Towards International Government*, p. 109.

⁷ George Allen & Unwin, p. 209.

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States in the future should be conducted by men and methods reflecting the national interests and common welfare of the peoples involved. This can only be compassed by provisions in the constitution of the Courts, Councils, or other international bodies, formed to secure the peace and promote the common good of nations, for the appointment of persons genuinely representative, in knowledge, capacity and interests, of the popular life of the several countries.

Whether such appointments should be made directly, by popular representation among the several peoples, or by election of their Parliaments, is not of vital importance. For unless the people are vigorous and intelligent enough to secure the mastery of their own national State, they cannot hope to control their international representatives upon the League of Nations, and the importance of the latter achievement ought to be an additional incentive to the former. It is the same current of democratic energy that has to flow into and nourish the organs of national and international government.

The commentary of history on this last sentence is, I venture to think, embodied in Chapter XIV of this book, and I am not repentant that I, both Mr. Hobson's disciple and Tennyson's, precociously proposed a full "Parliament of Man" elected in proportion to their populations by all the nations of the civilised world. In *Our Ultimate Aim in the War*, written a quarter of a century ago, were chapters describing an International Judiciary, an International Police, an International Executive and the methods of representation and an Appendix showing the nations' representation in an International Parliament on a popular basis. I hope I may be forgiven my temerity in ending this chapter by quoting:⁸

Contrast for a moment the atmosphere of such an assembly of popular representatives with that of a conference of the Ambassadors and Ministers of the Governments of Europe. Picture their intercourse, not only in the council chamber but in the committee-rooms, tea-rooms and smoking-rooms of the Parliament House, in the hotel lounges and the drawing-rooms of the metropolis in which it stood. Picture the intercourse of men representing not nationalities alone but common interests within the different national boundaries—common interests in commerce, in manufacture, in trade unionism, in science, in education, in political and social reforms of every description—what fraternisation, what dissipation of the miasma of misunderstanding and national prejudices there would be, apart from all more immediate and concreter results in the establishment of codes and tribunals.

Then follow these men back to their homes among their constituents, and picture their report, in formal speeches and in informal talks, on

⁸ *Our Ultimate Aims*, pp. 182, 183.

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their experience of their foreign colleagues, of the common aims and hopes and aspirations they had found among them, and the common determination that the great human interests of peace should find means of holding in check all the sectional and class interests that make for war.

Picture this process repeated in every constituent country through all the civilised world—the people's ambassadors travelling to and fro from the country to the Parliament and from the Parliament back to the country, each country acting and reacting on all the others through this new, free channel of intercourse. And then say whether any other conceivable political machinery is as well calculated to bring about that mutual understanding and esteem, and that mutual trust and forbearance, which are the sure guarantees of international peace.

Conclusions

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? Collective Security by means of the Covenant has failed, not, primarily, because the machinery was imperfect—there are many plans for its improvement—but because those States Members of the League of Nations who led in the decisions of Council or Assembly judged the risk of setting the machinery in motion, or of allowing it to continue in motion, to be too great when measured against the prospect of security actually resulting. Whether in these judgments those reaching them were measuring either the risk of the security of the States Members as a whole or only of their own States it would be futile to inquire—the result must be the same in either case. It may be said that, even as recorded in this book, the States Members leading in these decisions had too great and too overawing a power and that that may have been the fault of the machinery which some people want to overhaul. But no imaginable machinery could prevent a Great Power, represented as such by nominees of its Government, from exercising its power in the way its Government seemed best—for stated or unstated reasons.

The conclusion from that, it is suggested, is that Collective Security is to be attained, if at all—and if it is not, that will be the end of Western civilisation—by an assembly of representative men and women irrespective of distinction of nationalities, and not by representatives of sovereign national Governments. Sovereign national Governments will always, inevitably, as we see now, decide these issues in accordance with supposed national (or nationalistic) interests and not in accordance with the supreme interest of the men and women composing the human race. The direct representatives of the men and women composing the human race constitute together the only authority which should have the sovereign power to decide such issues, ignoring or overriding the supposed interests of this or that section of the men and women for whom an existing Sovereign Government may—generally untruly—profess to speak. “Generally”?—nay inevitably, because the people of no nation can have avowable “interests” con-

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flicting with those of the rest of the human race. The interest in peace, for instance, is demonstrably universal.

To establish such an assembly, or any institution cutting across National Sovereignty, would be, as Mr. Wells insists, a tremendous revolution (whether or not economic changes accompanied the political) and believers in such a revolution will differ as to whether its attainment should be attempted in instalments through "commissions" or altogether through a Parliament and a Government. As to that, most of us would say, "Get as much as you can, as quickly as you can." In the procedure suggested in Chapter XXVII above this issue does not arise. It is proposed that Britain should offer joint membership with her of a Federation for specific purposes and no decision as between, for instance, the *ad hoc* commissions of Mr. Wells and the International Council of Mr. Hobson is necessary till later. And the much debated question as to what countries ought to be the first members of the Federation does not arise either, because that would be automatically decided by the adhesion or the refusal of the countries seeking to free themselves or entrench themselves from Nazism and Fascism.

During the Great War-to-end-war it was held a crime to discuss the nature of the peace that must follow till "victory" had been secured. During this war discussion as to how to secure victory has to compete with vigorous discussions as to how to secure a *Peace-to-end-war*—which the last peace so signally failed to do—when this war is over. It almost seems to be thought that a real peace settlement is more important than any war, and who shall say that our experience of both disproves the belief? Anyway, since we do find ourselves in a war once more, let us make the most of the opportunity it brings us to cut the vicious circle at this point, for the nations must surely find this opportunity to build effectively for peace greater than in decades between wars when to-morrow seems nearly as good for the purpose as to-day. The country therefore needs to be roused to realisation of this great opportunity that is offered by "an invasion by propaganda" and the peace which might follow.

I have tried in the preceding review of the history of British policy since the last war, to show that during the last six or seven years the British Government has deliberately put aside the idea of Collective Security, which aims at minimising the risks of war for each of the States Members of the League by mutual assurance, and has replaced

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it with the old plan of an *ad hoc* combination of States, when specific disputes arose, for the enforcement of the British view of the matters in dispute. And in consequence now, when we are doing work which we claim is in accordance with the spirit of the Covenant, we have one ally only—and that only till she was beaten—of all its signatories in carrying out our pledged word to Poland. But this work we are doing in accordance with the spirit of the Covenant, and in accordance with our pledged word to Poland, Mr. Chamberlain explained to the world that we were doing not because we signed the Covenant but because we considered it to be contrary to Britain's vital interests that Germany should dominate Europe. Unfortunately the rest of the League membership in Europe did not seem to consider that Britain's vital interests concerned them as such. France was with us not because of Britain's vital interests but because of her own, which she would probably have defined in very much the same terms. Her pledge to Poland, though older than ours, was given for very much the same reasons. (Greece finds herself an ally by Mussolini's action rather than by her own.)

But the change over from Collective Security and the Covenant to the Balance of Power, anti-predominance, policy has never been ratified by the British electorate. The present Parliament was elected on November 14, 1935, and that election as we have seen was fought by the Government under the Covenant flag. Yet throughout Mr. Chamberlain's Premiership British policy was controlled by him not on a democratic but on an Authoritarian basis. The Democracy was, by *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, put to sleep by contemptuous dope. What were citizens who refuse the dope to do about it—the citizens, for instance, who spoke in the Peace Ballot and ranged themselves behind the Covenant and the limitation of the use of force to sanctions in support of Collective Security? Well, the first thing we had to recognise was that, for us, at any rate, who did not belong to those "drawing-room Fascists" whose motto was, back Mr. Chamberlain, right or wrong, as the man who knew what was best for Britain and the British Empire (and for the rest of the world as well) and needed no help from those who differed from him—that, for us, at any rate, Britain was now an Authoritarian State in which votes and the whole democratic machinery, including the Press and the Platform no longer availed against the entrenched Authoritarians or Authoritarian.

If Britain, then, was as much an Authoritarian State for those who

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disagreed fundamentally with Authority as Russia and Italy are, where conscription could be imposed in support of an uncovenanted—an unwanted—war, what could the dissentients do about it? For us that question must be and must remain of the most profound importance. "Agitation" in the old sense of street-corner speeches and the distribution of pamphlets and leaflets are nearly as impossible as physical "riot" or "rebellion" in face of the overwhelming power of Governments. New methods, inspired by a new conviction of the desperate necessity of resistance to evil, will be called for.

In the past we have had firmly held political convictions for which we were willing to endure the hostile political pressure that those in authority can bring to bear. To-day we have something more than political convictions to defend: we have a deep religious conviction that this Authoritarian State of ours, like other Authoritarian States, has done supremely wrong things for which ultimately all will share the responsibility who do not ultimately resist with all their powers regardless of consequences. Such a nation-wide—such a world-wide—"passive resistance" on a moral issue would be something new as the menace of Authoritarian Governments is new. Only so can the human spirit triumph over physical force wielded by human beings. Mr. Churchill is not Mr. Chamberlain: he betrays a sense of the popular will which Mr. Chamberlain in his palmy days did not possess. But the dilemma may return for others besides the Pacifist objectors to military service.

But suppose the *Union Now* of Mr. Streit or the War-Welded Federal Commissions of Mr. Wells or something like them was tried, what part could Pacifists take in it all? It is inconceivable that such Union or Federation will be attempted, either all together or in instalments, without arranging for a background of force. The force may be large or small, fully equipped as military men understand the phrase to-day, or confined to weapons which are judged to be defensive rather than offensive, contributed in batches by the nations or enlisted direct by the central authority. But *there will be a force*. Are Pacifists therefore to have nothing to do with a Union or a Federation to secure Collective Security of the whole world?¹

¹ But "Unless power can be combined with the intelligence and courage that can proclaim beforehand clearly what it is for, how it will be used, what we mean by 'defence,' how we propose to preserve peace by its use, then it will fail even more disastrously than it failed before. Let us face that lesson".—*Peace With the Dictators?* by Sir Norman Angell (Hamish Hamilton), p. 291.

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My direct acquaintance with the Pacifist movement as such is not long, but I have found few Pacifists who would give an affirmative answer to that question. Mr. Middleton Murry (now editing *Peace News*), to say nothing of Professor Joad, are only two of many leading Pacifists who have explicitly said that they consider the ability to resort to the use of force against a malcontent essential to any international Government. Other Pacifists will dissent from that judgment. I want to suggest that it is not necessary, for those Pacifists who aspire to be practical politicians as well, to answer this question at all. It seems to me to be quite consistent and quite honest to meet it on the lines I have ventured to suggest in Chapter II above. In the first place I am more profoundly convinced every day that "force can never solve moral problems and that its exercise with modern weapons can never be anything less than supremely wrong, however right the motives behind it seem to be." But I am equally convinced that a Pacifist, saying that, is bound also to say that "the most absolute Pacifism cannot absolve the Christian citizen from the duty to help to his utmost the building of the new world order—under an agreement, if need be, to differ as to how far, if at all, force will ultimately be found the necessary ultimate sanction."

Let us repeat on every appropriate occasion our disbelief in the value or right of force. But assuredly, having done that, we must also use every ounce of what influence we have as citizens and strain every nerve to work with everyone who will work with us, or will allow us to work with him, for the greater union of mankind to the end that the world may live at peace for the attainment of a destiny worthy of the sons and daughters of God.

APPENDIX I

Continuing Slaughter for "Punishment"? (1917)¹

(See pp. 24, 25, above.)

Conquest is declared to be the only possible means of military security. For them [the people who say this] the history of the world has proved in vain that military security is a thing that has no existence, and never has existed, and that the more thorough the beating which one war has achieved the more peremptory in the sequel has been the need of more repression and more violence for the military security of the victor. Security is the fruit neither of war nor of the preparation for war: it is the fruit of political contracts embodied in law. When war has brought Germany to enter into such a contract it will have achieved its utmost. From that moment its continuance can work direct mischief only. Pursuing the will-'o-the-wisp of military security, we shall let fall the substance of political security already attainable. The true fruits of victory, in the emancipation of the peoples of Europe from the tyranny of militarism, will be lost in a welter of hatred and despair.

What the apostles of punishment for its own sake persistently ignore—unconsciously, we may be sure—is the very patent fact that in war between nations equally well armed the punisher must be the punished as well, right up to the moment of victory. In decreeing that so many more Germans must be killed or maimed before peace can be entertained, they are decreeing also that at least a comparable number of Britons and Frenchmen and Russians shall be killed or maimed as well. How do non-combatant fire-eaters manage to forget this—for they surely must forget it—when they seek, by the vicarious sacrifice of others, to "satisfy their souls"² in vengeance? In punishing Germany we are punishing Europe and punishing England. Punishment has been dealt out with even hand through all these awful months: what

¹ From *Our Ultimate Aim in the War*, pp. 211-13, 217.

² G. K. Chesterton felt that the humiliation of Germany would "satisfy our souls" (*The Nation*, December 4, 1915).

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measure of the need for punishment is it that will not have been satisfied when peace upon terms has come within our grasp?

We whom age, or infirmity, or vital home service, or sex, have kept at home have steeled our hearts to watch our sons and our brothers, our husbands and our friends, go forth to take their part in the war which is to end war. They have gone—how gallantly they have gone!—with the promise on their lips that wrong shall be righted, and that if war can indeed end war, ended it shall be. The mothers and wives of those who will never return, the maimed who have returned, useless hulks for the rest of their lives, we have comforted, as we have comforted ourselves, with the assurance that they have slain and maimed and been slain and maimed that peace may reign instead of war. These young men when they went forth resigned their liberty into our hands. With us it lies to say when what they set out to do has been achieved and the slaughter and agony may end. It is not we, it is they, who must pay for the satisfaction of our souls. It is not we, it is they, who, if we will it, must “fight on to the last man,” and do all the heroic things our cheap eloquence makes us feel so brave about. It is an awful responsibility they have laid upon us. Shall we not rather cut off our hands and cut out our tongues than utter a word which shall prolong the war one moment beyond that moment at which the enthronement of right³ in European affairs may be achieved?

On our loyalty to these young men who have offered their lives for an ideal the charge is laid upon us, first to decide exactly what we demand of the enemy as the condition of the ending of the slaughter, and then, by proclaiming our decision to the enemy, and to the world, to secure beyond mistake that the moment at which they elect to accept our terms shall be the last moment of the war. . . .

Realisation has been brought home to the nations as never before of the horrors and appalling wickedness of war. Now, if ever, it is in their hearts to find a better way. To the bereaved and maimed in every land has come the longing that never again shall the best and brightest youth of the land be sent forth to kill and be killed because their elders can compose their differences by no other method. The shame of the infidelity of it weighs heavy on every conscience. This is the appointed day for the lifting of the burden. This is the day on which a beginning shall be made to turn our Christian civilisation to a reality from a sham. Let no man occupy himself with futile laments at the

³ Mr. Asquith's phrase.

Continuing Slaughter for "Punishment"? (1917)

lack of faith in his neighbour; let him look to himself. Let him have faith, and let the brightness of his faith shrivel up the doubts of those he talks with. These things can be, and by the grace of Heaven they shall be. Human will is the most potent of the forces of God's universe, and human will was created for just this thing—to will peace out of discord. Belief brings fulfilment. Pessimism is the deadliest disloyalty. Optimism is the only creed which loyalty allows to the children of God. "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

"We are fighting for two things. For peace now? Yes. But we are fighting also for security—for peace in the time to come," said Mr. Bonar Law in the House of Commons, and again, in *Peace and Security* (Blackfriars Press), I pointed the League of Nations way (1917): "The British Empire," says Mr. Lloyd George, "has invested thousands of its best lives to purchase future immunity for civilisation. This investment is too great to be thrown away." It is indeed [I commented]. But to reject a political settlement for the hypothetical "knock out" [Mr. George's phrase again] would be to throw after the lives "invested" through death countless further lives as well—and to miss the "return" upon our investment. Our soldiers fight on in simple reliance on our judgment as to how and when the fruits of their awful labours shall be gathered in and their labours cease. It is surely a soul-searching thought that here and in every belligerent country the decision as to how long the war shall continue, and on what terms it shall be ended, lies with those who themselves are safe from its ravages. The brave words are for us, the non-combatants: the brave deeds are for them. *We* decide how many lives to "invest" and what return shall be sought. *They* yield up the lives or silently hold them ready for our investment. Awful indeed is our responsibility to them, awful the obligation to make our investments to the best advantage for them, and for their children and ours in the years to come. By their silent devotion they challenge us with trumpet tongues to seek *every* means, to try *every* way, of securing that our end shall be gained without the sacrifice of one more human life than necessity compels.

“The Churches and the Coming Peace” (of 1919)

(See pp. 25, 26, above.)

In an address in the last weeks of the Great War I said:¹ I cannot speak of the attitude of the Churches towards war problems without saying that I think we have fallen short in our attitude to the young men who have said on their consciences that they could not and would not take part in war. We have convinced ourselves that this war was necessary and right. We know in our hearts that to convince ourselves of that in face of the plain meaning of the Gospel of Christ was a difficult thing. If we have been sincere with ourselves, we have spent anxious hours of thought and prayer in coming to that conclusion. These others have come to the opposite opinion, and have stood the consequences of so doing in the spirit which is absolutely the spirit of the Christian martyrs through the ages. No doubt there are some who lack sincerity or are actuated by cowardice among these men who have refused to fight. But there is a residuum, as you and I and each of us know, of sincere disciples of Christ who are facing persecution because they dare not do anything less in their loyalty to Christ as they understand his teaching. But we, my friends, all of us, have given way to a certain extent to the temptation to pass by on the other side and to draw the hem of our patriotic garments away from these men, leaving them exposed to the wicked, lying accusations that have been made against them of disloyalty to their country. . . .

We have decided we must endeavour, by force or with the assistance of force, to right wrongs. Is that an absolute negation of Christian teaching? If it is not, what is there that is left and are we giving due prominence to what is left? “Love your enemies!” We cannot feel what we understand by “love” for the authors of the fiendish cruelties and outrages which the war has shown us. But at the bottom the

¹ Before the Northumberland and Durham Unitarian Christian Association at Newcastle-on-Tyne, October 5, 1918, and published under the title of *The Churches and the Coming Peace*.

"The Churches and the Coming Peace" (of 1919)

essence of "love"—the beginning, at any rate, of love—is surely the attitude of mind which wishes well to one's neighbour—that, as the Prayer Book says of Christ, he desires not the death of a sinner but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; that we should wish to see wickedness repentant, wickedness forgiven, thoughts turned to higher things; that we should wish to wait the opportunity for helping such repentance: that we should keep our minds simple and pure—not in the mood which is intent on age-long revenge and punishment—but waiting and watching for the time for co-operation, understanding, mutual forgiveness and help. We feel a deep, stern, angry determination to prevent and punish wrong, but have we fought against the feeling of hate? Is it not one of the most peremptory demands of our Christian faith that we should hate the sin but *not* the sinner? . . .

Surely the Church should be equal to teaching the practical wisdom of Christian principles, the healing power of justice, as against the effects of the instincts of ascendancy and hate, the desire to crush and destroy beyond recovery. Which is the true wisdom, the worldly wisdom—which is the true Christianity—the trade boycott or the League of Nations? The two are incompatible. Let it be granted that whatever ultimate sanction, economic or military, you must have the sanction of force. But the idea of a trade boycott for its own sake remains nevertheless incompatible with and destructive of the whole conception of a League of Nations on which the whole world depends. "Do good to those that hate you," is a Christian precept—the Christian precept of precepts—and it is a precept of worldly wisdom. "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

The call to the Churches to-day is to complete the victory to which President Wilson is leading us, to build on sure and sound foundations for the future of humanity, to have courage to resist the doctrines of materialism on which selfish aims are based, to have courage to proclaim the greater power of spiritual and unselfish aims. And if the Church is true to this mission, if the Church, from this hour at any rate, under the call of President Wilson's leadership, will devote herself to proclaiming the supremacy of spiritual things, the coercive power of justice and unselfishness for the salvation of human ills even at the gravest moment in the world's history—then, and only then, can we pray in our Churches with sincerity and a clear conscience, "Thy kingdom come, they will be done—as in heaven, so on earth."

“Encircling Germany”

Story of the Blockade in and after the Great War

The following article, reprinted from *The Inquirer* of August 21, 1937, by kind permission of the Editor, is inserted here on account of the light the story sheds on a vital aspect not only of *this* war but of the peace which must follow it:

However fanciful was the belief that Britain aimed at the political “encirclement” of Germany before the war her physical encirclement by the British Navy is a prime fact of history. In *Grey of Fallodon*¹ Professor Trevelyan quotes a memorandum written for Grey by Mr. Alwin Parker, Head of the Contraband Department of the Foreign Office during the war, who in his turn quotes General von Kohl, Chief of Staff to Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria, as saying, “Many things combined to bring down the German people, but I consider the blockade the most important of them.”

It is startling, therefore, to learn that in June 1915 Grey was seriously considering a

proposal put forward by Colonel House, that England should raise the embargo on foodstuffs entering Germany, in return for German abandonment of sinking merchantmen by submarines.

Dr. Trevelyan cites a series of documents in which Grey

explains his views on the vexed question of the “Freedom of the Seas,” which he thought practicable only on conditions to be guaranteed by the United States, as part of a League of Peace; whether during the war it would be possible to let food into Germany in return for the cessation of the submarine campaign.

The British Cabinet, however, thought such an arrangement would be to Germany’s advantage and Grey . . . soon fell into line. Moreover Germany turned the idea down, thinking it would be to Britain’s advantage. So the ruthless war on both sides went on.

Two years later, in the summer of 1917, when the full effect of the participation of the United States in the war was making itself felt

¹ *Grey of Fallodon*, by G. M. Trevelyan, O.M., D.C.L., Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge (Longmans, Green).

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(after Grey's resignation), the official mind was considering the conversion of the “blockade” machinery into a device for apportioning to all Europe—Allies, enemies and neutrals—the diminishing supply of food and raw materials. Professor Zimmern, in his *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, 1918-1935,² reminds us that by then this machinery was fulfilling further purposes:

It had not only been supplying the armies and rationing the Allied peoples. It had also, under carefully advised safeguards, been rationing the neutral peoples adjacent to the blackaded area. From the administrative point of view, therefore, there was nothing either unduly novel or insuperably difficult involved in the idea of transforming what was now functioning as an Allied war-supply and blockade machine into an international machine for post war economic reconstruction.

To Mr. Sidney Webb belongs the honour of being the first (in the *New Statesman* of August 25, 1917) publicly to

propose the “extension and transformation” of the existing inter-Allied machinery, suggesting that, in its enlarged form, including both neutrals and ex-enemies, it should be placed “under the management of the Council of the League of Nations—or whatever may be the title of the Supernational Authority in which this war must issue.”

The article ended with the watchword, “No cake for anyone until all have bread.” And a year later still, at the instance of the Foreign Office itself, the War Cabinet directed the preparation of a detailed plan on these lines. This plan laid it down that “the adherence of our present enemies to these controls must form one of the conditions of the peace preliminaries.” “The adherence of neutrals,” it was added, “must also be secured and the machinery of the blockade must as rapidly as possible be superseded by the system of control administered by the inter-Allied organisation.” . . . This scheme was “the inevitable corollary of the whole idea of a League of Nations as it is beginning to take form both in the United States and in this country.”

A month before the Armistice Washington was approached. Washington did not answer until after the Armistice terms had been drawn up, but

on November 8th a reply was eventually received from Mr. Hoover, to whom the decision had been turned over by the State Department and, presumably, by the President. Its tenor was emphatically and indeed brutally negative, or perhaps it would be more correct to say,

² By Alfred Zimmern, Montague Burton Professor of International Relations in the University of Oxford (Macmillan).

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self-regarding. "This Government," so ran the passage, "will not agree to any programme that even looks like inter-Allied control of our resources after peace. After peace, over one-half of the whole export food supplies of the world will come from the United States, and for the buyers of these supplies to sit in majority in dictation to us as to prices and destination is wholly inconceivable."

We pass on to Armistice Day and Mr. Winston Churchill³ takes up the story in an account of how he sat and talked with the Prime Minister that night:

The conversation ran on the great qualities of the German people, on the tremendous fight they had made against three-quarters of the world, on the impossibility of rebuilding Europe except with their aid. At that time we thought they were actually starving, and that under the twin pressure of defeat and famine the Teutonic people—already in revolution—might slide into the grisly gulf that had already devoured Russia.

I suggested that we should immediately, pending further news, rush a dozen great ships crammed with provisions into Hamburg. Although the Armistice terms enforced the blockade until peace was signed, the Allies had promised to supply what was necessary, and the Prime Minister balanced the project with favourable eye. . . . [But] the armistice conditions had prescribed that the blockade of Germany was to continue. At the request of the Germans a clause had been added that "the Allies and the United States contemplated the provisioning of Germany to such an extent as shall be found necessary." Nothing was done in pursuance of this until the second renewal of the Armistice on January 16, 1919.

America's own representative, Dr. Alonso Taylor, recounted the immediate sequel when he called at Paris in that month on his return from a journey in Central Europe:⁴

Dr. Taylor says that one community may be starving while another has plenty of food, but the embargoes and seizures of railway transportation by the different Governments prevent the food from being distributed. He says that he did not see a single potato on the market or on the table in Vienna, although millions of bushels of them were to be obtained in Hungary. Each State seizes the former Imperial Government rolling stock in order to build up its own railway equipment. Bohemia cuts off the supply of coal for Vienna; the Yugoslavs refused transport of flour to Vienna until they could get salt. He says there is absolute and universal social disintegration. . . .

In fact [says Mr. Churchill] the blockade of Germany was extended to the Baltic ports and was thus made more severe than before.

³ *The World Crisis*, Volume V, *The Aftermath* (Macmillan).

⁴ *Zimmer's League of Nations*.

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The food situation in Germany became grave, and painful stories circulated of the hardship of mothers and children. During these months very few people in Germany, except profiteers and farmers, had enough to eat. Even as late as May members of the German Delegation at Versailles were suffering from the after-effects of want of proper food. There was in France and to some extent in England a deliberate refusal to face the facts.

In January 1919 began a long series of negotiations upon the conditions under which food might be imported into Germany. Public opinion in the Allied countries was callous. Their leaders were overwhelmed with business. A possible charge of "pro-Germanism" intimidated politicians.

It will be remembered that the rank and file of the British Army of Occupation took the first step to end this appalling state of affairs. Mr. Churchill continues:

Early in March the food negotiations at Spa appeared about to break down in a glacial rigmarole. . . . But Lord Plumer, who commanded the British Army of Occupation in Germany, sent a telegram to the War Office, forwarded to the Supreme Council, urging that food should be supplied to the suffering population in order to prevent the spread of disorder as well as on humanitarian grounds. He emphasised the bad effect produced upon the British Army by the spectacle of suffering which surrounded them. From him and through other channels we learned that the British soldiers would certainly share their rations with the women and children among whom they were living and that the physical efficiency of the troops was already being affected.

Armed with Lord Plumer's dispatch and these details, Mr. Lloyd George took the Supreme Council by the throat. "No one," he remarked, "can say that General Plumer is pro-German." The officials were chidden, and the negotiations resumed. The difficulties and disorganisation of the world were, however, so great that it was not until May that the substantial importation of food into Germany actually took place. The blockade, though according to the Peace Treaty in force until its ratification, disappeared altogether by the middle of July.

But a great opportunity had been lost. The German people, on November 11th, had not only been defeated in the field, they had been vanquished by world opinion. These bitter experiences stripped their conquerors in their eyes of all credentials except those of force.

In the midst of our plans for protecting our own people from the visits of "bombers" in "the next war" and for multiplying "bombers" of our own whose destination we can only surmise (apart from the Indian North-West frontier) let us ponder this story of what nations, or their rulers, are capable of *after* the battle has been fought and won.

“Casting Out Fear”¹

(See p. 143, above)

Friends who have read *The Inquirer's* necessarily brief report of my address as President at the Autumn Meetings at Lewes of the London District Provincial Assembly have asked me if I will not seek the hospitality of *The Inquirer's* columns to explain just what I meant when I said that I “sincerely believed then”—in 1917—“that we could not have done otherwise than repel force by force,” but that “I had changed my mind since that time.” By the courtesy of the Editor I am enabled to try to do so, and as history has continued to be written since September 28th, when we met at what seems the darkest hour before the dawn—pray heaven it may not prove a “false dawn”—I can perhaps explain more clearly than I could at Lewes the changed standpoint which I, in common, I am sure, with many others, have been compelled by recent history to take up in this vital matter.

I am one of those who, after working through decades for peace, found themselves compelled in 1914 to agree that the German invasion of Belgium must be resisted by force, and in June 1917, in my Presidential Address to the Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire, I said:

We have had to make up our minds whether we did or did not believe that force—the aggression of force—must be resisted by force. We came to diverse conclusions. Those of us—and I among them—who made up their minds that at this stage in our civilisation we must repel force by force had to make up our minds, saying *that*, how we stood to the Founder of our religion. And many of us said—nurtured as we are in the tradition of sincerity and simplicity—that we would not attempt to say that what we had decided we must do was in consonance with the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. We had to make up our minds that we must say in grief and humility that in this thing here and now we disagreed with our Master.

It is this declaration of “disagreement with Jesus” that I find myself unable any longer to assert with my former confidence.

¹ Being a reprint of an article by the present author in the issue of October 22, 1938, of *The Inquirer* (“Organ of Unitarian Christianity and Free Religious Fellowship”) by the courteous permission of its Editor.

“Casting Out Fear”

What does history record of the use to which the force then mobilised by us has since been put? Let this force, we said, be used permanently for the casting out of fear from the hearts of the nations by the restraint of aggressors everywhere. When the League of Nations emerged from the welter of Versailles we tried to regularise the use of force—defensive force—under the Covenant. We said we would exorcise fear from the world by insuring each other against aggression by the pooling of the forces of the nations. We tried to strengthen the Covenant by a Treaty of Mutual Assistance, a Protocol of Geneva, a Kellogg Pact, a Locarno Pact, and we talked of an International Police and an Equity Tribunal for the settling of differences. But each effort was sooner or later defeated. We entered into endless discussions as to how to show our confidence in the Covenant by disarming—and slipped almost unconsciously into re-arming, still in support of the Covenant to Cast Out Fear.

But meanwhile the force to resist force in defence of Belgium continued for six months, *after* the defeat of the invasion of Belgium (and France), the blockade of a defeated Germany, while a vindictive and unjust peace was being hatched, till we were shamed out of it by our own soldiers who shared their rations with the German women and children in the occupied Rhineland. It remained in the Rhineland paralysing any resistance to the Ruhr iniquity, trying to exact impossible reparations. But the force to resist force was *not* used, despite the Covenant, to resist the invasion of China, of Abyssinia, of Spain, all members of the League.

But then at last the Western Democracies made a stand. We said that if necessary force should be met by force in defence of Czechoslovakia. Yet, even in saying that, the British Prime Minister said:²

However much we may sympathise with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbour, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to invoke the whole British Empire in war simply on her account. . . . But if I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force, I should feel that it must be resisted.

This is not the teaching of the Covenant, but the teaching of the old policy of the Balance of Power. Not for Czechoslovakia, not for Belgium, not for Serbia, can Britain go to war; only the curbing of a too

² In a broadcast speech on September 27, 1938.

Why Another World War?

powerful neighbour is a sufficient *casus belli*, as it was twenty-five years ago and one hundred and twenty-five years ago. So goes the Covenant, with never a use of Article XIX buried in the dirge of the Prime Minister:³

I cannot help reflecting that if Article XIX of the Covenant providing for the revision of the treaties by agreement had been put into operation as was contemplated by the framers of the Covenant instead of waiting until passions became so exasperated that revision became impossible, we might have avoided a crisis.

The British Prime Minister went to Hitler

As Priam to Achilles for his Son,
So you, into the night, divinely led,
To ask that young men's bodies, not yet dead,
Be given from the battle not begun.⁴

Yes, "for young men's bodies not *yet* dead," but the Western Democracies proceeded to guarantee to the two Dictators that Czechoslovakia should submit to dismemberment—not as the result of careful investigation and weighing up of rival claims but by our support of force which we could no longer resist—or which we no longer thought it worth while to resist. Yet the frontiers now held to be unjust we gave the new State at Versailles, with a guarantee for their protection.

The use of force for insuring international right has broken down. Given the existence of arms, national self-regarding aims have proved once more stronger in their use or disuse than the international aims of the Covenant. Neither in totalitarian nor in democratic States can peace lovers who also love justice control their use. In the light of this twenty years' experience—to go no farther back—I and others dare no longer support the building up of forces which we have no guarantee will be used to resist aggression and to resist aggression only.

"But I say unto you that ye resist not evil." Can Jesus, with divinely inspired reason, have known just this about what is involved in the use of force—primarily in regard to the passions of individual men and women and by implication in regard to the passions of nations? I do not know, but I do know that I will never again, in resistance to His teaching, ask young men not yet dead to do to others ("defending"

³ House of Commons, September 28, 1938.

⁴ By John Masefield, Poet Laureate, in *The Times* of September 16, 1938.

“Casting Out Fear”

me and mine) as Japan and Italy have done to China and Spain, and that I will never again let my citizenship be used to enact conscription. I do not know what the disciple of Jesus meant when he said that “perfect love casteth out fear,” but I do know that for me there is an end of trying to cast it out by armaments.

“Watchman, What of the Night?”¹

(See p. 143, above)

We must make ourselves strong and we must make ourselves safe.—The Official Guide to National Service.

Thus saith the Lord God: Your covenant with death shall be disannulled—Isaiah.

“Watchman, what of the night?” Whether these words were actually written before the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar or were written in retrospect after its reinstatement by the Persians, they clearly relate to those precarious years before first one and then the other of the sister kingdoms of Israel and Judah were engulfed by Assyria and by Babylonia; and through the ages they have echoed in men’s hearts in times of trouble and darkness. “Watchmen, what of the night?” and the ultimate reply, “The morning cometh.”

What is the watchman’s reply to-day? For surely the night is about us. All history, from creation’s first morning, is the record of alternate progress and retrogression, though optimists among us are still assured that we never slip back the whole distance of our previous progression. And there was retrogression in 1938 and still is in 1939. The only question is how far back *this* retrogression is destined to take us. Experience forbids us to suppose that the morning will not ultimately come: but how soon will it come and what can we do to hasten it?

For those of us having vivid war memories a grievous vision was declared to us last September and has not been far away through the succeeding months. Our hearts panted, horror affrighted us as it affrighted Isaiah. So we watch on the watchtower and cast our eyes backward and forward.

“In the beginning,” in creation’s first morning, “God created the heaven and the earth and God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And

¹ An address at Essex Hall on January 18, 1939, printed as an article in *The Inquirer* of February 11, 1939.

"Watchman, What of the Night?"

God blessed them and God said unto them replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over it." God called us to be co-creators with Him. We *have* subdued the earth and the sea and the air, though all of them rebel now and then—disastrously for us. We manipulate their substance and harness their forces to our pleasure.

And God saw everything that *He* made and behold it was very good. And man sees everything that *he* has made, man the vice-regent of God, and behold it is ——. We dare not continue the parallel, though it is indeed a wonderful story of what man has done in his vice-regency, most wonderful in that part of it which our fathers and grandfathers and ourselves saw, from the invention of the steam-engine culminating with the conquest of the air by the aeroplane and the broadcaster. What countless and unmitigated blessing these things can give to mankind while they are benevolently used by philanthropists. But they can be malevolently used by misanthropists, and they are so used every day in all parts of the world.

How perfectly adapted is the broadcaster for the dissemination of human hate and aeroplanes for the destruction of human life. In all countries, at the instance of dictators and democracies alike, men of science are studying and experimenting to find the most deadly explosives, the most devastating ways of using them and the fastest way to reach their objectives. In all countries alike the present practical experiments in Spain and in China are being watched and we may be very sure that those responsible can see, as the Spanish rebels and their Italian masters and the Japanese conquerors see, that the process is not yet quick enough for practical purposes.

Be sure that the laboratories and the engineering shops everywhere are overhauling and revising plans in the light of this knowledge. There will be no finality in this line of research till it can be said that so many aeroplanes supplied with so many bombs of such and such a power can destroy life and possessions over such and such an area—whatever the area of your latest discovered "enemy" happens to be—in such and such a length of time, and then the time element must be progressively reduced.

We have said: "We must make a covenant with death, and with hell we must make an agreement; so that when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us."² Our babies, at least,

² Isaiah xxviii.

Why Another World War?

shall be evacuated far from the path of the scourge. We will dig holes in the ground and set up cunning defences in that path for those of us who cannot flee from the drawn sword and from the grievousness of war and will equip us a twin scourge with which to scourge others first. That is our covenant with death, our agreement with hell.

But thus saith the Lord God, "Your covenant with death is disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall never stand. When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then *ye shall be trodden down by it*. As often as it passes through, *it shall take you*; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night."

We older ones knew this, last September when the scourge threatened us so nearly; we remembered how it took us in 1914, treading down our nearest and dearest by day and by night.

We cannot *direct* the overflowing scourge of war. Whichever of the nations sets it overflowing and thinks to ordain where it shall or shall not pass through, no covenant, no agreement, whether with death and with hell or with allies and associates *can* stay it. For practical purposes our covenant is already disallowed.

Watchman, what of the night? And surely the watchman says, There is no smallest sign of the dawn—in the direction in which nations are looking. Yet the dawn *must* come, *shall* come, *will* come. Right is more powerful than wrong, goodness is more powerful than evil, the essential good in man is indomitable and unconquerable.

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We tried after the Great War-to-end-war to combine to secure Collective Security. Because everybody would combine against any aggressor national armaments were to be reduced or abolished. But again and again we have conspicuously failed to combine against a named aggressor and now we are all re-arming for individual security and people say that he is foolish who thinks *any* defensive alliance will surely survive a critical test.

We may have ideas as to what it would be right to fight about and as to what it would be wrong to fight about. We may think of another Belgium, another Serbia, another Czechoslovakia, or we may think of the integrity of an Empire. But it has been demonstrated that Governments, in democratic as well as in autocratic countries, cannot be relied upon to accept the selected *casus belli*—still less to refrain from propounding a wrongful *casus belli*. This instrument—modern armaments,

“*Watchman, What of the Night?*”

the overflowing scourge—is uncontrollable even by those who are set up to control it. Once war begins, for however carefully selected a cause, it spreads till the whole world is involved and the aims in the minds of those who started it will be swamped and destroyed and become impossible of realisation, long, long before the war is ended—if ever it is really ended.

God created the heaven and the earth and man in His own image and gave to man dominion over the earth and the power utterly to destroy everything on it including himself. And God is watching man's preparation for his own destruction. *But it is no idle watching.* Man, the lover, is revolting against man, the destroyer—by God's prompting. In the image of God created he him: a rational being created he him: a lover of men and of goodness created he him.

Watchman, what of the night? No one wants war, answers the watchman. In increasing numbers in every country men are determined *not* to wage war. That is the streak of light dawning on the horizon. This thing has become too big, too menacing, too uncontrollable to be met and defeated by anything less than the revolt of individual man, and in sufficient numbers to make war no longer possible. And that is coming. However it may have been in the past, the war machine is too horrible, too wicked in its effects, for *any* cause—least of all the cause of mere self-defence—to justify its use or to justify the individual in sanctioning or supporting its use. *No* consequences of the resistance to the call to arms could be more terrible than the wound which participation must inflict on an awakened conscience.

“We renounce war and, with God's help, we will never support or sanction another.” Thousands in all lands have thus resolved. There are dangers in this path too, but for these it seems certain that, whatever the danger and the difficulty, this is now the only weapon which will not recoil in the hand that wields it. . . . That way, sooner or later, the overflowing scourge shall be stayed, whatever or whomsoever the scourge overwhelms before its staying. “And in that day shall the Lord of Hosts be a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty and for strength to them that turn back the battle at the gate.”

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